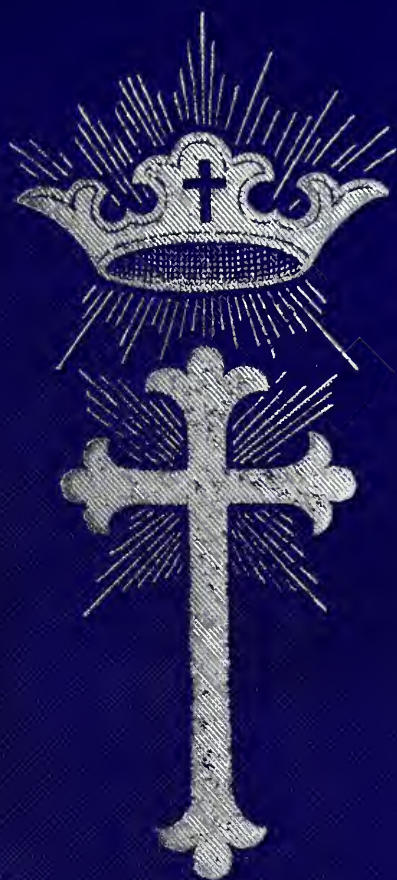
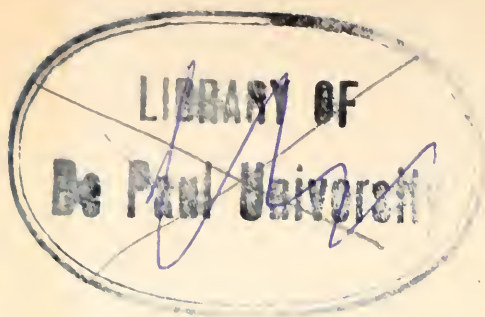


Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace



Eleanor C. Donnelly

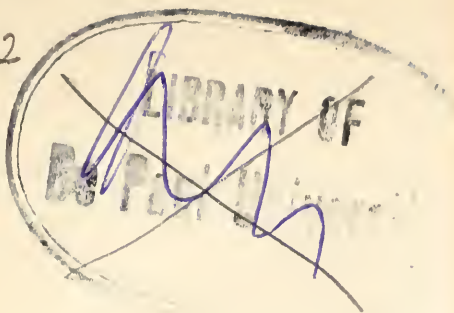


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SISTER MARY GONZAGA GRACE.

T
LIFE

OF

Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace

OF THE

DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

1812—1897



By *ecelia* ELEANOR C. DONNELLY

The Proceeds to be Appropriated for the Orphans



PHILADELPHIA :

1900

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Philadelphia,

Festival of Sts. Peter and Paul, 1900.

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated

BY THE AUTHOR

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHAN ASYLUM.

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LIFE OF SISTER MARY GONZAGA GRACE

WHO DIED AT ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHAN
ASYLUM, PHILADELPHIA, PA., ON
OCTOBER 8, 1897

By ELEANOR C. DONNELLY

"The just shall be in everlasting remembrance."

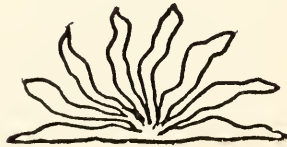
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Life of Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace.

I.

LITTLE BABY ANNE.



ALL Christians are called to a life of holiness ; but all are not called to the same degree or species of sanctity.

No two saints are alike. The grace of each is as different as is his or her call.

We see this exemplified in the parable of the Talents intrusted by the evangelical householder to his servants.

Sanctity consists in the right and profitable use of the talents given to us. It does not depend upon extraordinary prerogatives or marvelous manifestations. Some of the greatest of God's saints have led ordinary and hidden lives. They have never wrought a miracle—have never, as yet, been canonized by the Church.

Cardinal Bellarmine, who for a long time was spiritual director of the Roman College of which St. Aloysius Gonzaga was a member, often declared that there lay in the burial vaults of that

house several young brothers of the Society of Jesus, who had not been inferior to Aloysius in the perfect holiness they had attained.

A simple little illustration will make this clearer.

A long, slant sunbeam darts, like a jeweled javelin, through some crack or crevice, and pierces the shadows of a darkened room. Watch the motes go dancing up and down that little golden ladder! Some are ever bathed in its resplendent glory; they scintillate like mimic stars. Others move continually to and fro, equally busy, yet hidden from view in the darkness of the dusty air. Thus, is it ordained that the divine light of God's providence should bring some souls into shining prominence in this dark old world of ours, whilst it leaves others with equal capabilities of brilliancy hidden in the dull shadows of the obscure and commonplace.

It is a grave mistake to look for nothing but the extraordinary and the marvelous in the lives of the saints.

It is worse. It is really a masterly illusion of the devil.

The enemy of man well knows that he never does his work in souls more thoroughly than when he leads them into this error.

They who embrace it fall inevitably into one or the other of two delusions. They either sin

by presumption, in striving to imitate in their own experience the unattainable; or fall into despair, because of failing to arrive at the extraordinary heights or gifts attained by certain saints of exceptional vocations.

Both courses result in the abandonment of the ordinary ways and means of salvation; and incur, thereby, the risk of resulting in eternal perdition.

What we should endeavor to imitate in the saints is not those wonders that are mere accidents of their sanctity, but rather their solid virtues, their constant fidelity to grace, their humble self-sacrifice, their persevering struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In the simple, holy woman who is the subject of this Memoir, we recognize a model whom all may thus imitate in their state and degree.

There is little that is extraordinary in her life—little that is marvelous or sensational. Like the Blessed Mother of our Lord and Saviour, her sanctity seemed to consist singly in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

A holiness, this, that is attainable by all sorts and conditions of men.

To present, then, to all, an exemplar who may console them in their tribulations, strengthen them in their temptations, and teach them how to make a profitable use of the talents intrusted

to them by God, we now begin to lay open before them the beautiful story of this humble, self-denying life.

On the twenty-second day of February, A. D. 1812—less than four months before war was declared (for the second time in our nation's history) between the United States and Great Britain—a girl child was born in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, who was to prove herself, in years to come, a veritable dove of heavenly peace and innocence.

This babe was Anne Grace, the child of Protestant parents.

Her father was a seafaring man. We know not if he took part (as is probable), with others of our gallant American sailors, in any of the naval battles of the war of 1812; or whether he lost his life in that struggle for his country's cause.

We only know that he died in 1814, when the little Anne was but two years old.

His poor widow, thus left desolate, battled bravely on through the many hardships and deprivations of war-times, striving, as only a decent Christian mother can, for the care and support of her little daughter.

Alas! she was destined to survive her husband but a short space.

The wise decrees of heaven had ordained that the child who, in the future, was to share the destiny of the *matrem filiorum lætantem* of the Psalmist, who was to be the devoted, sympathizing mother of unnumbered orphans, should taste in her own early experience all the anguish, the desolation, the bitterness of complete and destitute orphanhood.

In the year 1816, Mrs. Grace died of yellow fever.

Every one knows the horrors of that hideous malady. Its contagious character, alone, might well have banished from the sufferer's room all attendants, even of her own flesh and blood; but, to the widow's bedside, during her awful illness, came a stranger, an angel of mercy, whose name deserves to be written in letters of gold upon the immortal annals of divine charity.



II.

MISS MICHEL'S PET LAMB.



MISS ELIZABETH MICHEL, though then but seventeen years of age, was already old in virtue and good works.

A refined, intelligent girl, of German Catholic blood, she was devoted, in her lovely maidenhood, to the service of the poor and sick, regardless (it would seem) of race or creed. In her tender bosom glowed the spirit of a Christian hero, the courageous zeal of an apostle of the Faith.

Oblivious of personal danger, this dear young maiden visited the afflicted Mrs. Grace in her last illness. The terrible "Yellow Jack" had no terrors for the young soldier of Christ, who penetrated into the very stronghold of contagion and death, to comfort her Master's suffering ones, and secure the salvation of their souls.

Her sweet face and slender, black-robed figure (she always wore black) were a familiar sight in those purlieus of the old city where the dreaded pestilence reigned; and she proved indeed a ministering angel to poor Mrs. Grace and her fatherless daughter.

During the progress of the dreadful disease, through all its loathsome stages of fetid fever, jaundiced skin, and black vomit, Elizabeth Michel's attentions to the dying woman were so constant, so devoted, so delicate—her instructions so wise, so full of a living faith, hope, and charity—that she became the instrument of God in converting the poor widow to the true Faith. Her

“ words had such a melting flow,
And spake of truth so sweetly well,
They dropped like heaven's serenest snow,
And all was brightness where they fell,”—

a celestial brightness that penetrated even into the chill, lengthening gloom of the Valley of the Shadow, cheering the departing soul of the much-tried invalid.

At the call of the young Elizabeth, the priest of God came to the lonely one in her agony, with all the succors and benedictions that holy Mother Church provides for her children at that tremendous hour.

Mrs. Grace became a Roman Catholic, and died happily in the peace of the Lord, leaving the little Anne an entire orphan at the age of four years.

The livid corpse of the poor widow had been hurried away for the swift burial accorded the

victims of the plague during those hapless days.

In the humble home from which she had departed forever, her dear little orphan daughter—the helpless, desolate baby, Anne Grace—faced, unconsciously, the most thrilling, most eventful phase of her little life.

There, stood her dead mother's empty bed ; here, her vacant chair. On one side of the poor little room were gathered several of her Protestant relatives, just returned from the widow's funeral ; on the other, sat the gentle, black-robed girl, Miss Michel, who had been as a pitying angel of light through all the dark hours of the mother's sickness and death.

We can fancy the death-like stillness that now prevailed. All eyes were riveted on the little maid in their midst, looking so pathetically small and frail amid the heavy shadows of her great bereavement.

Presently, a voice broke the oppressive silence of the room. One of the non-Catholics addressed the motherless child in some such words as these :

“ Anne, your father and mother are now both dead. You cannot stay on here, alone. A home must be found for you at once. We are ready to adopt you as our own. You can either come to us, your own flesh and blood ; or you can go to

this strange young lady, Miss Michel, who seems willing to take you and provide for you. Choose between us. To whom will you go?"

The little orphan understood enough of all this to realize its importance. Her hard circumstances had made her unusually wise and precocious. She looked earnestly from the faces of her Protestant relations into the clear, loving eyes of her young Catholic friend.

In that moment's solemn pause, the very angels of heaven must have bent their bright heads earthward, listening with eager, prayerful interest for the child's reply. The spirit of the dead mother, hovering near her tender little one, must have hung with breathless concern upon the decision of those tiny lips.

The salvation, not of one, but of thousands of precious souls, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, trembled, that instant, in the balance.

Then, the breathings of the Holy Spirit (ferently invoked, we doubt not, by Elizabeth) moved irresistibly the child's guileless heart.

Like Ruth of old, clinging fast to Naomi, and exclaiming: "Whithersoever thou goest, I will go; wheresoever thou dwellest, I will dwell"—the little Anne, running to Miss Michel, threw her arms around that true mother of her soul, and looking up into her lovely face, cried out: "I choose *you*! I will go home with you!"

O prudent decision of a baby mind! O thrice-blessed choice of an innocent heart! In its mysterious depths lay hidden, for that orphan child, the golden promise of a consecrated future—of a faith-guided career, that would have been hopelessly dwarfed and thwarted in any other atmosphere than that of the true Church of Christ.

Miss Michel folded the dear innocent close to her bosom, and repeatedly kissed her baby face.

The Protestant relatives, indifferent to the child's choice, or perhaps (because of limited means and the burden of their own family cares) secretly glad to be freed from further expense and responsibility, withdrew, one by one, from the house.

Elizabeth, left alone with Anne, began at last to carefully study the situation. She had literally adopted the little orphan as her own especial charge. Inflamed with the fire of Christian charity, she had not, as yet, thoroughly considered all the consequences of her step.

She was an undeveloped girl of but seventeen. At such a tender age, would not her good and wise father, to whom she was devoted, oppose her taking upon herself so grave a responsibility?

Mr. John Michel was a native of Germany. He had been a schoolmaster of strictest discipline in his native land. Might not the intro-

duction into his household of a young and stirring child, almost an infant, to say nothing of the many cares and expenses attendant on her rearing, annoy or irritate the worthy man?

Elizabeth shrank from disturbing, in the least, the peace and quiet of her father's declining years. She had her own private purse. No one interfered with the exercise of her many charitable works.

Taking the little Annie by the hand, she led her to the house of an excellent woman of her acquaintance, who agreed to board the child for the present.

Stern fate had thrust the little fledgling from the warm covert of its mother's wings, but the homeless sparrow had found itself, that day, a safe, secure nest.

Baptized in the Roman Catholic Church (said to have been St. Patrick's, Baltimore), Anne, at Miss Michel's desire, was known, henceforth, as Agnes Mary Grace.

Every week, the good woman with whom she boarded brought the child to visit her devoted young foster-mother.

Elizabeth then lived with her father near the present site of St. Alphonsus' church, on West Saratoga Street, Baltimore.

The child's coming was a bright spot in the somewhat dull and quiet routine of the small

household. By degrees, the old gentleman became interested in his daughter's infant protégée. He began to watch for her weekly visits—to miss, when she was gone, the music of her artless prattle.

After a year or so, he had grown so fond of the little girl, was so entertained by her pleasant chatter and caressing ways, that, one day, he surprised Elizabeth by questioning:

"My daughter, why don't you bring the child home here, altogether? She would be great company for me—especially, when outside matters take you away from my side."

"Nothing would please me more than to give you such a bright little companion," replied the devoted Elizabeth.

And so it came to pass that, to the delight of all concerned, orphan Agnes and her small belongings were transferred at last to the Michel household, where the little darling was permanently installed as the especial pet of the family.

Some six happy years rolled away amid the pure joys of this congenial Christian home.

We know not if, during this peaceful time, the spirit of Elizabeth's aged father passed away to the Better Land; we can only surmise that the parental home being broken up, her little foster-child beginning to grow taller, waxed more slender and delicate in her growth.

Where could Miss Michel place her that she might become more robust in body, and, at the same time, enjoy the advantages of a higher education than her present surroundings afforded?

In those early days, there was but one spot in the vicinity of Baltimore that thoroughly satisfied these requirements. This was the holy school in St. Joseph's Valley, of whose origin and progress we shall have more to say in our next chapter.



III.

MOTHER SETON AND HER SISTERS AT EMMITSBURG.



THE close of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth, were illustrated in the American Church by many brilliant and fadeless lights.

The names of CARROLL, NEALE, MATIGNON, BRUTÉ, CHEVERUS, FLAGET, BADIN, DUBOURG, DAVID, DUBOIS, still cast their splendors down the vista of the years upon the religious thought of our own day ; whilst the apostolic simplicity, the self-devoted zeal of these men of God put to the blush the half-hearted sluggishness, the world-tainted indifferentism of much of our modern spirituality.

There were radiant constellations of sanctity in those pioneer days ; and among them, beams forth

“ one bright particular star,”

the shining orbit of whose exalted destiny they all touched in their turn.

Do we need to designate this gracious luminary ? Do we need to name ELIZA BAYLEY

SETON, the illustrious foundress of the Sisters of Charity in the United States?

Born of a highly-respectable family in the city of New York, nearly two years before the declaration of American Independence, Eliza Bayley was reared in the Episcopal communion, to which she adhered with fervid devotion until after the death of her husband, Mr. William Seton, in 1803.

This sad event occurred in Italy, whither Mr. Seton had resorted (with his wife and one of their children) for the recovery of his health—threatened by the dread destroyer, Consumption. His friends, there, were two Italian merchants of Leghorn, known as the Filicchi Brothers, with whom he had had business relations in the past.

These noble gentlemen were the staunch supporters and consolers of the widow and her little ones in the terrible days of their bereavement in a strange land. They and their devout Catholic families first revealed to Mrs. Seton the truth and beauty of the Roman Catholic faith; and, with the grace of God, strongly inclined her to embrace it.

Returning to America, however, and meeting with bitter opposition from her Protestant relatives and friends, who involved her in continual controversy on religious subjects, it was not until Ash Wednesday, the fourteenth of March, 1805,

that Mrs. Seton was received into the True Fold.

She made her recantation in St. Peter's Church, New York, bringing with her into the religion of Christ her five dear young children—two sons and three daughters. Before long, she was also instrumental in the conversion of her beloved sisters-in-law, Cecilia and Harriet Seton.

Having placed her sons at Georgetown College, this "widow indeed" (to apply to her the significant words of St. Paul) began to experience an intense desire to withdraw with her little daughters to some convent in Canada, where she might perfect herself and them in the principles of their new faith; and, at the same time, find scope for her varied talents as a teacher.

Dr. Matignon, however, having remarked to her, in (what might seem, in the light of after-events) a genuine spirit of prophecy, "*You are destined, I think, for some great good in the United States; and here you should remain in preference to any other location,*" Mrs. Seton acceded to the wise proposal of Very Rev. William V. Dubourg, President and founder of St. Mary's College, Baltimore, that she should remove at once to that city, with her daughters, and transfer her sons from Georgetown to St. Mary's.

Dr. Dubourg further advised that she should open a boarding-school in Baltimore, for the support of her family, and the promotion of her pious desires to aid in the Catholic education of young girls.

The noble convert and her children, accordingly, came to Baltimore in the month of June, 1808; but, before the close of that year, heaven had clearly manifested its real designs on the future of Eliza Bayley Seton.

A divine inspiration came simultaneously, after Holy Communion, to her and to a wealthy young student of St. Mary's College, named Samuel Cooper.* It was revealed to the one, that God had ordained her to consecrate herself to the care of poor female children; and to the other, that he must devote his worldly means to the establishment of a proper institution for this purpose, under Mrs. Seton's charge.

Bishop Carroll and Dr. Cheverus (later, Bishop of Boston) both approved cordially of this joint inspiration, the fruit, as it was, of humble and single-hearted petitions for light and direction on the part of the holy personages most concerned in it.

Emmitsburg—far removed from the bustle of

* Mr. Cooper was a Philadelphian. He had been a Protestant and a society man, prominent in the fashionable set. Later, he became a priest of austere life, abounding in charitable works.

Baltimore, remarkable for its pure and salubrious atmosphere, and soul-inspiring in the wild grandeur of its mountain scenery—was selected for the site of the new establishment.

About half a mile south of the village, the ground was bought, whereon stood a small farmhouse. This was to be prepared for occupancy by Mother Seton and her companions.

The first to join her in her devout enterprise was Miss Cecilia O'Conway, of Philadelphia, daughter of Matthias O'Conway, a teacher of languages and a famous Celtic scholar. An interesting sketch of his life was published, not long since, in the *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, a memoir of his daughter, Sister Cecilia, having previously appeared in the same quarterly, admirably prepared by the late Miss Sara Trainer Smith, under the title of *Philadelphia's First Nun*.

Two other ladies of the city of Penn followed Miss O'Conway to the new religious establishment—Miss Maria Murphy, daughter of Captain Murphy (sometimes called *Burke*, from her stepfather), and Miss Mary Ann Butler, whose father was a Captain Butler, and whose brother was Rev. Thomas Butler, once President of Mount St. Mary's College, Maryland, and also a missionary to Kentucky.

Miss O'Conway and Miss Murphy had purposed originally to enter a convent in Spain, but meeting Fathers Babade and Dubourg in Philadelphia in 1808, and learning from those (then) reverend directors of Mother Seton's institute, of its foundation and its ends, they resolved to offer themselves for the new work at Emmitsburg.*

Miss Susan Clossy, of New York, also entering, shortly after, as a postulant, the little community (by the advice of Father Dubourg), assumed a religious habit. This consisted of a black dress with a short cape, resembling a costume worn by some Italian Sisters whom Mother Seton had observed when abroad. The head-dress was a neat white muslin cap with a crimped border; and a black crape band, drawn across the head, was fastened under the chin.

From Baltimore, soon came two new aspirants for religious life—Mrs. Rose White (a widow), and a Miss Catharine Mullen. To these, were added, later, Miss Cecilia Seton, Sarah and Ellen Thompson, and Mother Seton's eldest daughter, Anna, or Annina, who died in her seventeenth year in the odor of sanctity.

All this while, the little community had occupied a small log-house on the mountain side,

* These details are gleaned from certain Notes on St. Joseph's Asylum, contributed to the *Philadelphia Catholic Standard* in October, 1886, by Mr. Martin I. J. Griffin.

loaned them by the Very Rev. President of St. Mary's College.

In July, 1809, removal was, at last, made to the little farm-house before mentioned, on their own land in St. Joseph's Valley. There, the Sisters began devoting themselves to the instruction of youth, and the care of the poor sick in their neighborhood.

Mother Seton's ardent desire was now, in conjunction with her ecclesiastical superiors, to model her little institute on that of the DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, two centuries before.

The chief obstacle to this design lay in the fact that she was the mother of five fatherless children, who must be protected from the bigoted influence of wealthy Protestant relatives, and who, consequently, looked altogether to her for their care and support.

However, relying upon Divine Providence for the ultimate happy solution of the present difficulty, Rt. Rev. Dr. Flaget, bishop-elect of Bardstown, Kentucky, being about to embark for France, in 1811, was commissioned to procure for the new community a copy of the Rule of St. Vincent.

This, when brought back to Emmitsburg, in due time, by Dr. Flaget, was modified and adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the American

foundress by Archbishop Carroll; and the constitution of the community having been confirmed by the Archbishop and the Superior of St. Mary's College, Baltimore, the Sisters began to observe St. Vincent's Rule early in the year 1812.

They were then occupying their new house in the Valley, to which they had removed in February, 1810. It was thoroughly consonant with St. Vincent's spirit of holy poverty—being a log-building, two stories high, wherein all the appointments and environments inculcated complete disengagement from earthly things and an humble contempt of the world.

Placing her community under the special patronage of St. Joseph, Mother Seton began here the foundation of her school for girls, now famous as ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY, Emmitsburg.

Never shall it be known, until the Angel of Judgment blows his silvern trump, and summons the dead to appear before the tribunal of God to receive the reward of their earthly deeds, the amount of good for the glory of the Most High, and the salvation of souls, that has been accomplished by this noble Sisterhood of Mother Seton, who (as their holy Rule declares) have had, through the term of their existence, "no enclosure but obedience, no gate but the fear of God, no veil but that of modesty."

Bossuet has said: "We can add nothing to the glory of extraordinary souls, whose works praise them;" and from St. John Chrysostom we learn, that "Charity is a miracle, the most excellent of miracles." "The grace of miracles," he adds, "may be common to the just and to sinners, as there are robes common to the king and his subjects; but CHARITY is the supreme gift; it is the privilege of saints, as the crown and sceptre are the ornaments reserved for kings, by which we recognize their dignity."



IV.

SCHOOL DAYS AT ST. JOSEPH'S.



O the primitive school in St. Joseph's Valley came little Agnes Grace in the month of December, 1822.

Mother Seton was then dead. The great heart of the valiant woman had been consigned to the dust in 1821; but the good she had done was not, in her case (as the poet avers to be the usual lot of man),

“interred with her bones.”

Her cherished establishment lived on after her and flourished in the deathless vigor of the God who had inspired it. The fragrant aroma of Eliza Seton's virtues—the pure light of her recent, all-pervading presence—seemed still to flood the field of her self-devoted labors.

Sister Rose White had succeeded her in the office of Superioress. This was the pious widow lady from Baltimore, whom we have mentioned as one of the first companions of Mother Seton at Emmitsburg.

“Her sound judgment and administrative talent, joined to a fervent piety and sweetness of manners,” says Rev. Dr. Charles White (possibly her relative), in his admirable biography of



the Foundress, "indicated her as a person well qualified to succeed Mother Seton."

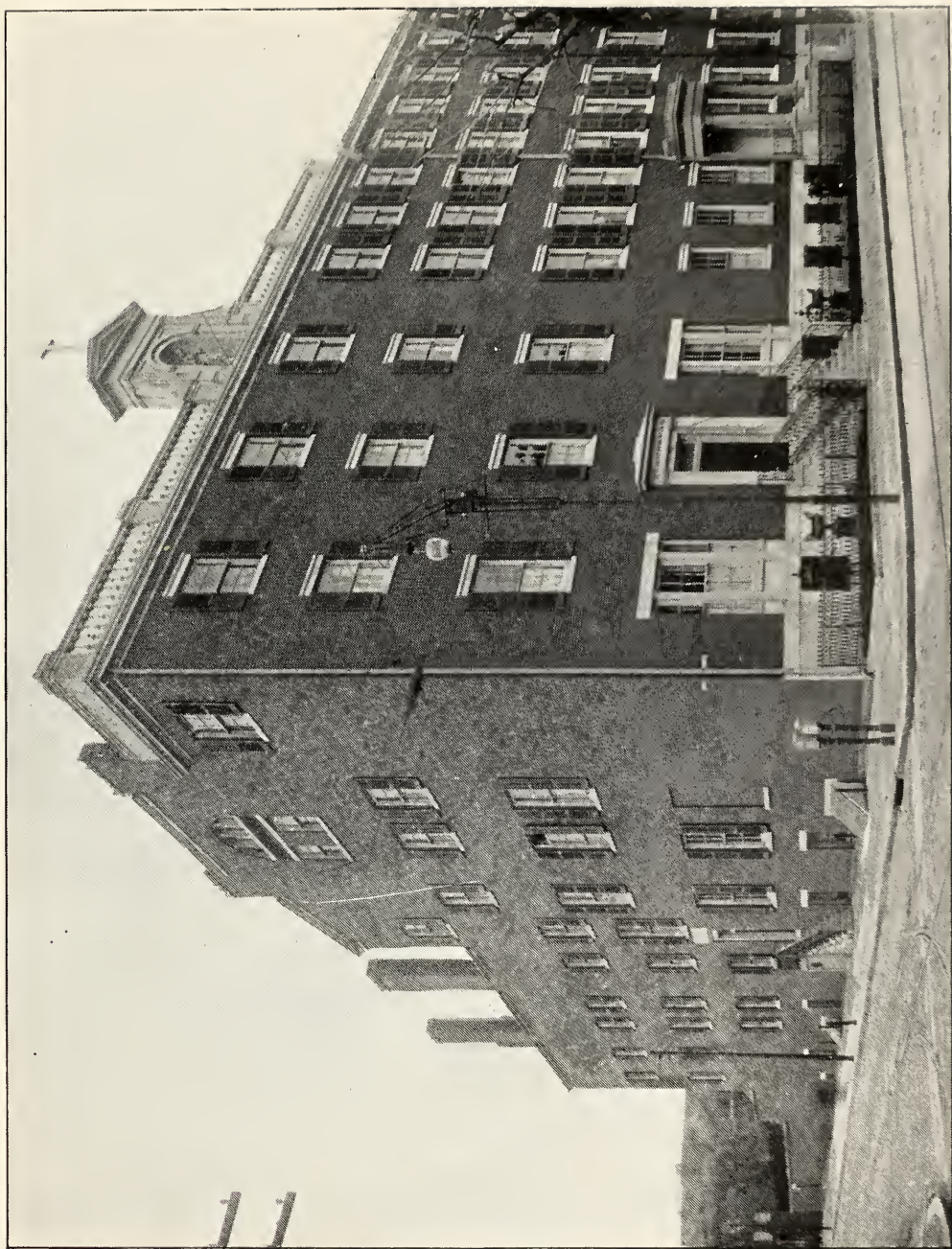
At the time of her election to this office, Sister Rose was acting as Sister-Servant at the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum, where she had been Superioress since September, 1814.

The epidemic of yellow fever in Philadelphia, in 1798, had left behind it a multitude of destitute orphans. A number of charitable gentlemen of the Quaker City (many of them Spaniards) were moved to take some steps for the succor of these hapless little ones of Christ.

At first, at their own expense, they put the children to board in private families. This plan, as might be well understood by those experienced in the careful rearing of the young, was not satisfactory in its results.

A house was next rented in Front Street, below Lombard, under the charge of a matron, named Caney. This humble refuge, in a few years, becoming too small, the little inmates and their caretakers were removed to a house on Sixth Street, to the northward, adjoining Holy Trinity (German) church, and then belonging to one Adam Primruer.

In 1807, the Asylum was incorporated under the title of "THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SOCIETY OF ST. JOSEPH FOR EDUCATING AND MAINTAINING POOR ORPHAN CHILDREN."



ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM, SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SEVENTH AND SPRUCE STREETS, PHILADELPHIA.

Seven years later, Rev. Dr. Hurley, O. S. A., then pastor of St. Augustine's church, Philadelphia, wrote to Mother Seton, begging her to give him Sisters to care for the unfortunate little ones, to whom he ever proved himself a true and devoted friend.

This was the first foundation the Emmitsburg Sisters were asked to make; and St. Joseph's was their first Asylum in the United States.

Three of mother Seton's spiritual daughters, under the superiorship of Sister Rose White, left the Valley, on the feast of St. Michael, September the twenty-ninth, 1814.

They were driven in an old coach, begging hospitality as they went. In their stops at Taneytown, Baltimore, Lancaster, every one received them with the greatest kindness and hospitality.

The third evening, after many inquiries, they arrived at the city of their destination. They knew not which way to turn in the strange streets. Again and again, the good old driver, Mr. Livers, would hand the reins to one of the Sisters inside the coach, and get out to inquire, from door to door, where he might find St. Joseph's Asylum.

At last, the old man grew very tired.

"You might as well ask a pig about a holiday," said he to the Sisters, "as ask these people where St. Joseph's Asylum is!"

They drove on, up one street and down another, not knowing whither they were going.

Finally, almost in despair, the old man stopped suddenly, with the exclamation, "I'll try in here!"

Behold! the coach had paused before the door of Holy Trinity church.

Father Rolff's housekeeper, a good French-woman named Justine, ran out in a flurry, thinking the vehicle with its closed curtains contained a corpse brought for burial. She at once surmised who its live inmates really were, and directed them to the Asylum, which was close at hand.

Sister Rose was not able to take formal possession of her charge until October the sixth. In the outset of their difficult work, the Sisters met with many hardships. They had barely sufficient to procure the actual necessities of life. For three months they were forced to use potatoes as their main support. Their coffee was made from carrots, and was quite sugarless. The fuel for the house was gathered principally from tan-yards.

But soon, warm friends arose on every side to aid the holy souls struggling so bravely under their heavy burden; and a society of ladies was formed to support them in their good work.

Substantial encouragement and practical

sympathy had thus placed the Asylum upon a solid and prosperous basis by the time Sister Rose White was recalled from it to succeed the lamented Mother Seton at Emmitsburg.

She had been Superioress a year or more in St. Joseph's Valley, when little Agnes Grace arrived at the school as a pupil.

The foster-child of Elizabeth Michel must have, there, manifested excellent dispositions, since we find, among the early records of her life at school, the certificate of her first Holy Communion dated, as we shall see below, the thirteenth of April, 1823. It will be remarked that, for some unknown reason, the child's name is entered upon the certificate "Ann," her original appellation, and not Agnes Grace.

The document reads thus :

"I made my first Communion, April
13th, 1823.

*"The body of my Lord preserve
my Soul to Life everlasting !*

"Ann Grace.

"B. Smith.

"Day of the Good Shepherd."

(" B. Smith " was doubtless the name of the Rev. Father who administered to her, for the first time, the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.)

Thus, thanks to the careful training and thorough instructions of Miss Michel, the little girl was permitted to approach the altar, and feed upon the Bread of Angels when she had resided at the convent but four short months.

On the twenty-second of June of the same year, she received the sacrament of Confirmation, possibly from the hands of Most Rev. Ambrose Marechall, D. D., Archbishop of Baltimore, at that date, as the following record declares :

" I received Confirmation June 22nd,
1823.

*" Confirm, O God, what thou hast
wrought in me.*

" Mary Joseph Grace.

" B. Smith."

Our little friend assumed in the sacred rite the new name of JOSEPH, in honor of the illustrious Foster-father of Jesus, whose patronage was to pervade so continuously her whole future

life, as well as the field of her longest, and seemingly, most fruitful labors.

The year succeeding her reception of these two great Sacraments, the health of the little Agnes cost the good Sisters at Emmitsburg much anxious thought and care. We find the child writing to Miss Michel, under date of the twenty-ninth of September, 1824 :

“MY DEAR MOTHER:—With much pleasure I received your letter of the 4th of August. I hope you will excuse my not writing to you so long. I have been sick for near a month, and was not expected to live, but I am very well at present,” etc.

An enclosure of the same date addressed, in all probability, to Miss Margaret Mackey, a devoted, lifelong friend of Miss Michel, also reads as follows :

“ST. JOSEPH’S VALLEY, *Sept. 29.*

“It is with infinite pleasure, my dear Margaret, I inform you that I have recovered from a spell of sickness which lasted about a month. Our dear Lord spared me, I hope, that I may serve Him better than I have hitherto done. I had every attention paid me by my dear Mother and Sisters. I now see how necessary it is to be always prepared for death, as the time is so uncertain. Although we are at a distance from each other, let us unite in praying that we may fulfill His holy will in all things. I remain,

“Yours affectionately,

“AGNES GRACE.”

These serious thoughts in so young a child—couched, as they are, in excellent language—are certainly unusual and most edifying. Yet Miss Michel (not fully understanding, it would seem, the delicate state of her foster-child's health) must have entered some complaint at this date as to the little girl's remissness in her studies. We glean this from an autograph letter from Mother Rose White, dated the twenty-ninth of December, 1824—the original time-stained document is before us—thus acquainting Elizabeth with the cause of her protégée's backwardness:

“MY DEAR MISS MICHEL:—Your little Agnes felt your last letter, & I hope it may be productive of much good in making her more attentive & studious. Yet, I know not if I could accuse her justly of not being attentive, as she has been truly ill with two very severe spells of bilious fever, which left her, for some time, much debilitated, & her head greatly affected, so that she could not study. It was necessary to indulge her. This may account for her not writing as frequently as you wished, yet I fear her letters have been mislaid, as she has written several times. She is a most meritorious, good child; and if her health should be good, I would be most happy to see her persevere with us.* Her last monthly ticket was very good in all the following classes: Grammar, very

* This would seem to indicate that Mother Rose had already discovered in Agnes the germ of a vocation.

good ; History, Reading, Spelling, Writing, Geography, Cyphering, Sewing and Behaviour, very good. As to her being in want of anything, be not uneasy. She has the same attention & care as the rest of the boarders, and we all feel much affection for her. Wishing you every blessing, I remain,

“ Respectfully & affectionately yours,

“ SISTER ROSE.”

For the space of a year or two from this date, Agnes Grace continued to feel the effects of her distressing illnesses. Her nervous system must have been much disordered by the continued attacks of fever. As late as the close of April, 1826, a school report of her studies and conduct having been forwarded by Mother Rose to Miss Michel, that excellent lady was concerned to read in it that her foster-child's health was “ not good.”

Whilst this report stated that Agnes' English branches were excellent, that her behavior and judgment were good, and her talents very good, there appeared under the head of Temper this unsatisfactory record :

“ *Fretful, and has much pride to contend with ;*” and under that of Manners :

“ *At times, very amiable—yet, frequently influenced by her temper.*”

To those of our readers who have had the happiness of knowing our dear Mother Gonzaga

personally, these old-time statements, anent her girlish dispositions, may prove an unpleasant surprise.

They will be unable, unwilling, to associate pride, fretfulness, caprice, or bad temper, with even the childhood of that lovely, even-souled, lowly-spirited woman, of whom one who lived with her, in closest intimacy, for more than thirty years of her religious life, has declared: "I have known many beautiful souls, but never one like hers. Ever placid, nothing ruffled her. I never saw her angry."

And yet, if we may be allowed to say it (without disedifying our readers), we were better pleased with that ancient yellow document for recording Agnes Grace's school-girl failings, than if it had shown us the flawless brilliancy of a naturally faultless character.

It furnished additional confirmation—if any were needed—of the truth of St. Paul's personal testimony, that the grace of God is sufficient for His tried and tempted servants; that divine power is made perfect in their infirmity. St. James says: "In many things we all offend;" and what he also says of the prophet Elias, may be truthfully said of many other of the saints: "They were men like us, subject to sufferings like us."

It is well for us all to know that the singu-

lar meekness and humility which distinguished this chosen Daughter of the mild St. Vincent were the results of supernatural grace, of un-sleeping vigilance, of persevering and painful efforts at self-mastery.

There is no royal road to sanctity, save that which à Kempis styles "the King's highway of the holy cross."

All the blessed ones whom St. John saw in his Apocalyptic vision, clothed in white robes and bearing palms in their hands, as they stood before the Throne, and in the sight of the Lamb, "are they" (as one of the Ancients assured him) "who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

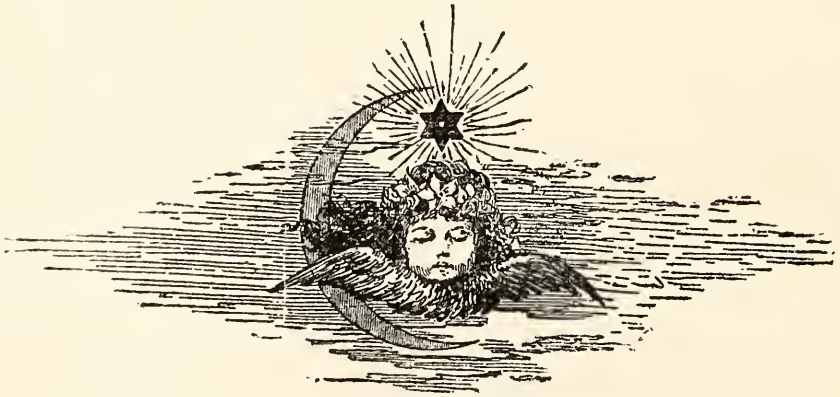
Have we ever well considered the origin of that word "*tribulation*," which in its major degree of intensity must prove the portion and the preparation of all the saints for Paradise?

Little Agnes Grace had yet to learn that it was derived from the Latin (*Tribulatio : tribulum*), and signified a kind of threshing sledge, consisting of a wooden platform, studded underneath with sharp pieces of flint, or with iron teeth.

To endure the "great tribulation" of the elect was, then, to be racked and torn with the confessions of Christ in the torture-places and prisons

of the pagans, or to be cast with His martyrs to the wild beasts of the arena, and ground like wheat between their powerful teeth.

It still is, and shall be for all time, to be caught, as it were, betwixt the upper and the nether millstones of many crushing trials—many self-annihilating afflictions; to be led by the Crucified One out of “great tribulation” unto the glory and rewards of the just in the City of Eternal Rest.



V.

DAWN OF A DIVINE VOCATION.



AUTHENTIC proofs of our little heroine's diligence and progress in her studies are not wanting to this loyal narrative of her life.

Devoted hands have preserved, to this day, the annual certificates of her improvement at St. Joseph's school, in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography. Those quaint, hand-painted testimonials of the years 1824, 1825, and 1826 lie before us, as we write, yellow with age, their stiff garlands of palm interspersed with clusters of old-fashioned roses, carnations, and violets.

One powerful motive now underlay the little girl's determined efforts to master her natural defects, and profit by the discipline of her instructors. In spite of her small imperfections and shortcomings, the seed of a divine vocation had already been sown in the soul of Agnes Mary Grace. We discover this in Mother Rose's allusion above mentioned and also in a letter from her own hand, dated as early as

March 12, 1826, from "St. Joseph's happy Valley," as she terms it:

"MY BELOVED MOTHER," (writes she to Miss Michel):—"It is unnecessary for me to tell you that I am *happy*, because you know that I am perfectly so, as much as I could wish to be. I cannot say that I have felt otherwise since I came to this blessed Vale, where peace and content are pictured in every countenance."

After sending remembrances to several of her friends in Baltimore, and expressing her zealous desire to know if one of them, a certain Mary Barry, had yet made her First Communion, she continues:

"Dearest Mother, I hope, by this time next year, I will have the honor of having on that which I so much desire. I mean the *Candidate's Brown Cap*. Oh! what a blessing, if I ever have the extreme felicity of putting it on; but I will try and be good, and I hope I will, one day, be all that you can wish me to be."

In conclusion she inscribes, in her exquisite Italian penmanship, these lines on *Hope*—the sublime hope she was then cherishing in her pure young heart:

"Sweet, soothing Hope, celestial treasure,
Heavenly, self-illuminated, fair,
Holy-kindling, holy-expiring pleasure,
Ours thy aid; we claim thy care.

“ As the furious storm descending,
Turgid billows swell the sea,
So, my quivering soul defending,
Keeps or quits her orb with thee.

“ Ah ! why unclasp thy silver pinions,
Dear, precious refuge ! last and best ?
Still be my heart thy sure dominion,
Still moor thy anchor in my breast.”

. . . . “ I have grown so tall that my dear
Mother says I am almost as tall as you are.

“ Yours affectionately,

“ AGNES MICHEL GRACE.”

On September 20, of the same year, she again writes Miss Michel from Emmitsburg, of her cherished desires for religious life:

“ MY EVER-BELOVED AND DEAR MOTHER :—As the Rev. Mr. McGerry (McSherry?) and the Rev. Mr. Egan were leaving this place, and to pass through Baltimore, I thought I would avail myself of the opportunity, and address these few lines to you ; informing you at the same time that I am well and happy (though I never was otherwise), and still continue in my wish of being a SISTER OF CHARITY ; but still” (she adds, with a tender fear lest her dear Elizabeth should deem her less loving because of her dawning desire to leave her and all creatures for God alone), “ I should very much like to see you, but in no place except up here.”

Our dearest Lord certainly had his special designs on this privileged soul, since, from her fourteenth birthday (or even earlier), she fostered the hope of consecrating herself entirely to His service and that of His poor.

For two years, she eagerly besieged her superiors for permission to enter the Sisterhood. Again and again, she fervently implored dear old Father Hickey and Mother Rose, of sweet and happy memory, to give her the Candidate's little cap.

To each entreaty, she received the self-same reply:

"My Lamb" (a play, doubtless, upon her name *Agnes*), "you are too delicate. You would be of no service in the Community."

Behold! how limited, how imperfect is the wisest of human foresight! Prudent and experienced as they were, how little could Father Hickey or Mother Rose, then, have foreseen that the child who was refused entrance to the Order on the score of bodily infirmity and apparent uselessness, would live to become the ornament and blessing of her Community—would be spared to round out her nearly four-score years and six in a career abounding with every description of virtues and good works!

Finally, importunity mastered opposition. On the eve of St. Joseph's day, 1827, the young

Agnes concluded to make another appeal to her Superioress for the hallowed boon she so ardently craved.

This time, her powerful patron, St. Joseph, the especial promoter of the hidden life of souls devoted alone to Jesus and Mary, must have exerted himself in her behalf.

To the inexpressible joy of the earnest child (she had just turned fifteen), the little Cap of the Candidates was at last given to her.

"Often have I heard her relate the above," writes the Sister* who, afterwards, succeeded her as Sister-Servant at the Philadelphia Asylum. She frequently told that dear sharer of her confidence and cares that, after receiving the postulant's Cap, she never again returned to the class-room as a pupil. "The joy of my heart," she added, "was so great that I could never put it into words."

The precious days of the novitiate passed in a heavenly peace and happiness that, for our little Candidate, had but one disturbing element.

This was due to a new, a strange anxiety about her beloved foster-mother.

A great and unexpected change had taken place in Elizabeth's life, while the child of her adoption was entering upon the first stage of her predestined career.

* Sister Mary Joseph Heuisler.

Miss Michel's personal graces, exceptional virtues and many engaging qualities, had drawn upon her the attention and admiration of a most desirable suitor for her hand—a lover, worthy of her in every respect.

This was Mr. George Anthony Heuisler, a noble-hearted young man of excellent parts and sterling Catholic virtues, afterwards to be known as one of the master architects and builders of Baltimore.

He proposed marriage to the daughter of John Michel, and was duly accepted. Their union as man and wife, which soon followed, was an ideal Christian one.

This can be plainly gathered from the circumstances and fruits of the marriage, as well as from authentic documents, still extant, which we have been permitted to examine.

A certain class of modern readers and reviewers is given to raving over the love-letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to her husband, not long since published. The newspapers and magazines of the day have devoted an immense amount of valuable space to extracts from these epistles, and fulsome commentaries on their contents.

And yet, in our estimation, the letters of this other (less famous) Elizabeth to her spouse reveal a purity and elevation of Christian love

and sentiment far surpassing the erotic transcendentalism of the English poetess' effusions, if lacking their elegance and studied grace.

They are such letters as a St. Delphine might have penned to a St. Elzear—an Elizabeth of Hungary to her dear Louis of Thuringia.

Instance this passage from the hand of our Elizabeth, when her husband was at a distance from her:

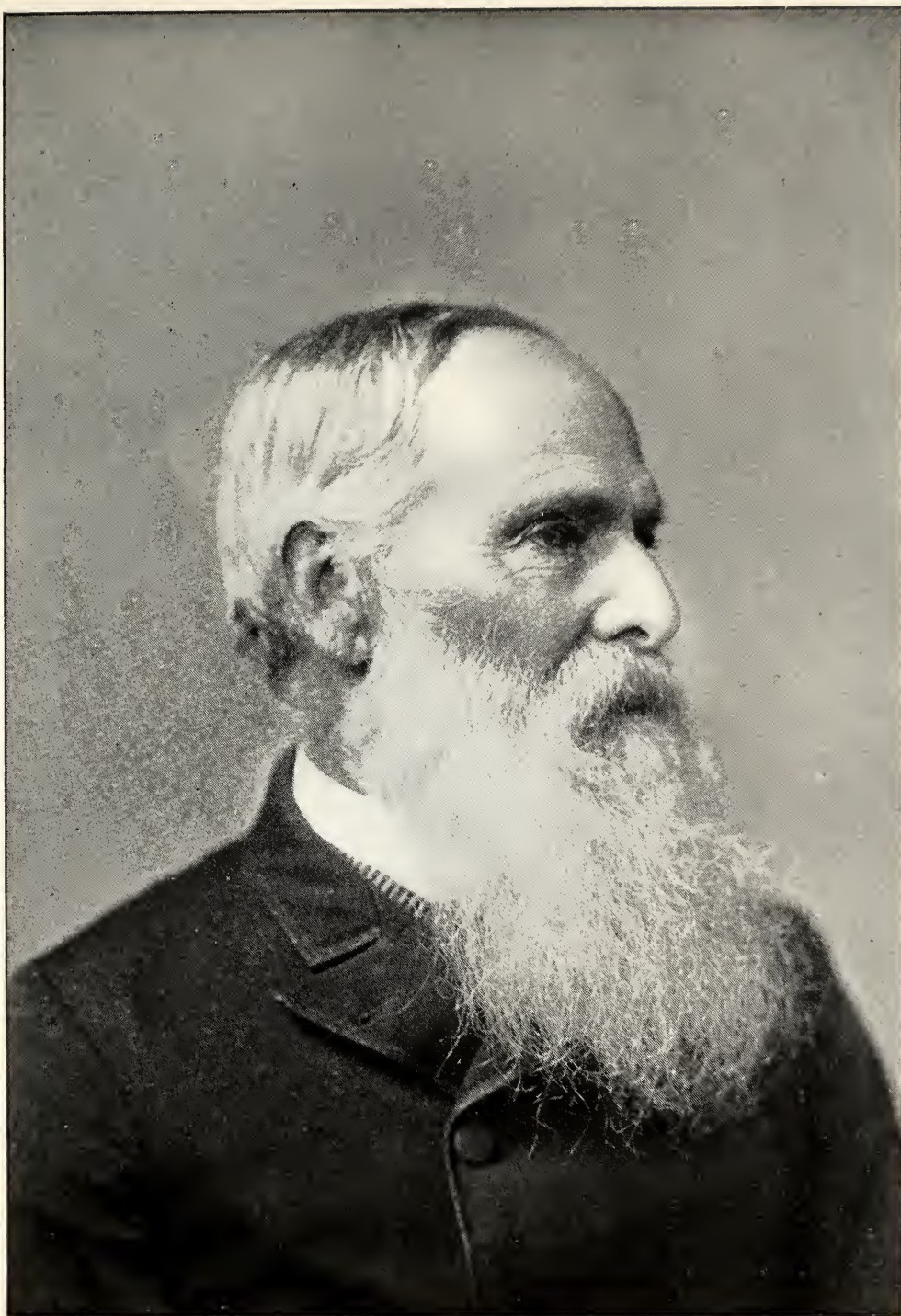
“There is nothing, my dear George, can give me more pleasure than to know that in our voluntary separation you endeavor to keep up the strictest rules of Christian morality ; for, believe me, it is my great confidence in you (together with a profound submission to the will of God, and His help) that enables me thus to resign you to a land of strangers, which you know is quite contrary to the weakness of the softer sex.”

And again :

“I cannot express the joy, the happiness, the pleasure, I experienced when I read those words, ‘ I WILL GO TO COMMUNION THE FIRST OF THE MONTH ! ’ And I, too, will go, my dearest, and we will be united at the Holy Table, and partake of the same Divine Food. How happy are we, among thousands, who do not or *will not* seek the same inestimable treasure ! For, our holy religion not only arms us with Forti-

tude to bear our afflictions with patience, lightens their heaviest pressure, but fills us with those sweet consolations to which so many others are strangers. Devotion, then, offers to us her holy sanctuary, in which our wounded hearts are healed, our wearied minds are at rest ; where the cares of a tumultuous world are forgotten and hushed, and our many deprivations disappear ; where, as I have often in the overflowings of my heart expressed to you, greater objects appear to us than what this world presents ; where shines a more serene sky ; and where calmness and the sweetest peace (to use a borrowed expression) beam on our afflicted hearts. Oh ! my dearest George, be then devout, be pious, be *virtuous*. For, to those three things we owe the highest improvement of our natures, and much of the enjoyment of our lives. They are our support and rest here below ; they compose our thoughts, calm our passions, and exalt our hearts. . . . May, therefore, that God, who is justified in all His works," she concludes in this beautiful letter, "be your guide (not only in your absence from me), but throughout your life. And may you enjoy all the felicity which flows from what I know you have—a sound understanding, and pious and well-regulated affections. For, in these consists that sovereign good which the very heathen writers so much extol, which Religion authorizes, reason (though not the foolish reason of the world) recommends, and God in His goodness approves,—for which shall be, my dear, the most earnest, the most fervent and affectionate prayer of your devoted

“ ELIZABETH.”



MR. GEORGE ANTHONY HEUSLER.

From the exalted sentiments mirrored in these epistles, one can easily argue how superior was the object of their author's undivided affections. None but a soul of equal nobility and elevation could have elicited, or corresponded to, the breathings, the demands, of so exquisite, so unusual a nature.

The husband was, indeed, eminently worthy of the wife. In his declining years, we had the happiness of meeting George Anthony Heuisler, when he visited, on one occasion, the foster-child of his love, and his own dear daughter, at St. Joseph's Asylum, Philadelphia.

Even in his advanced age—then some three-score years and ten—he was one of the most charming of old gentlemen. His personality was singularly striking and attractive. His tall, willowy figure was full of easy grace, his statesmanlike head and face instinct with a fascination all their own.

There was nothing *old* about him, save his silver-gray locks. He had the buoyancy, the freshness, the geniality of youth in every word and movement. To see him was to think of the green mountain-top crowned with an early snow, which retained evermore the purity, but not the chill, of its fair, white diadem. He was the impersonation of

“An old age, serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night.”

From the graces of such a man in his advanced years, one could well guess how irresistible he must have been in those enchanting days when he successfully enacted the rôle of *Romeo* to Elizabeth's *Juliet*.

In the course of years, Agnes Grace learned to know, to appreciate, to tenderly love this good and noble-hearted gentleman; but, at the outset, her dear Elizabeth's choice of the marriage state was a sore disappointment to the devoted foster-child. She wept uncontrollably at the prospect of the nuptials. The virginal heart of the little Candidate in St. Joseph's Valley rebelled against giving the woman she so loved and revered into the keeping of any mere mortal man.

It was hers to exclaim with the Bride in the Canticles: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him, who sleepeth among the lilies. I have found Him whom my soul loveth: I will hold Him fast, and will not let Him go;" and she would fain have seen her Elizabeth in the future, as in the past, leading, like herself, a life of single blessedness, consecrating body and soul to the service of Christ, and of His precious members—the poor and the sick.

But her bitter tears over the approaching marriage were of no avail.

The wise and sovereign Will of God was to have its all-powerful sway—eventually turning

the bitter Marah of the young novice's grief into waters of sweetness and benediction.

Elizabeth Michel became the happy wife of Mr. Heuisler; and Agnes, submitting herself (with what resignation she could muster) to the divine decrees, threw herself with a renewed spirit of holy detachment and delighted fervor into her chosen duties of convent life.

On the eleventh of March, 1827, the young Candidate was formally received into the Sisterhood of Eliza Seton, being invested with the holy habit, in the simple little chapel at Emmitsburg.

She was now known as SISTER GONZAGA.

The surname of the youthful Jesuit, the sainted scion of a princely Italian house, was, doubtless, given to Agnes Grace at her entrance into the Community, because of her tender years and childlike innocence.

At any rate, it was under the title and patronage of the young and guileless Aloysius that she commenced, thus auspiciously, her long career of holiness and usefulness in the religious life.

The Italian Gonzaga's purity, humility, obedience, spirit of evangelical poverty and divine love, now began to be faithfully reproduced in his American namesake.

As with him, so with her, the blessed days

of the novitiate passed swiftly in the exercise of the higher virtues, in the possession of that singular peace and happiness born of an heroic mastery and discipline of self.

But, where death speedily crowned the holocaust of St. Aloysius' life, the crown of his girlish namesake's self-renouncement was to be that living death of Obedience, that long-protracted immolation of the Vows, sometimes harder to bear than a swift and rapturous release from the prison-house of the body.

It came first to our young novice in the fiat of her superiors, exiling her, in those early days of her vocation, from her beloved retreat in St. Joseph's Valley to the more public sphere of a distant asylum.

The hour had arrived for Sister Gonzaga to be sent forth from the seclusion of Emmitsburg to her first holy mission.

VI.

EARLY MISSIONS IN HARRISBURG AND PHILADELPHIA.



IN the month of April, 1828, our dear young Sister quitted St. Joseph's Valley in company with two older religious, Sister Stanislaus McGinnis and Sister Lucy Ignatius.

Their destination was Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where they were instructed to open a school.

The present flourishing capitol of our State was then a very wild and primitive place. In those pioneer days, there were no railroads to facilitate travel. Those whom business, or the love of adventure, drove abroad, were forced to journey in stages, or rude wagons, through lonely woodlands, and across brawling streams or rough mountain stretches.

Our modern religious, in their commodious convents, well lighted, well warmed, and well equipped with every labor-saving appliance, can scarcely understand the discomforts and privations of an age when the wonders of electricity and many of the capabilities of steam were unknown: when not a pound of coal or a foot of

illuminating gas was burned in the whole country. When all the cooking and heating of an establishment were produced by the aid of fire, kindled on brick hearths, or in brick ovens—kindled, moreover, not by the easy ignition of friction matches (which had not yet been invented), but by flint and tinder.

In our present comfortable, well-appointed conditions, we find it hard to comprehend the annoyance, the inconvenience of our forefathers and foremothers, when, their fires happening to go out, and the tinder chancing to be damp, they were forced to trudge through the snow, for a mile, to borrow a live brand of a neighbor.

Pine knots, or tallow (home-made) candles, furnished, then, to householders in ordinary circumstances, all the light for the long winter nights. Sanded floors prevailed, devoid of rugs or carpet. Except in case of actual sickness, but one room was kept constantly heated in the winter home; and the people of a century ago, or less, undressed and went to bed in a temperature colder than that of many a modern barn or wood-shed.

Church affairs, in such quarters as Harrisburg and its vicinity, were also, at that time, as may be supposed, in a very backward condition, and Catholic privileges very limited.

There were orphans there, as elsewhere, how-

ever, to be cared for; and the poor and the sick, who are always with us, to be visited and consoled.

It was our little heroine's first mission; and what a charm, what a freshness, what a subtle, magnetic something that never grows old or commonplace, there is for the young religious in even the hardships of a first mission!

The bounding spirits and hot blood of youth absolutely revel in the myriad obstacles and difficulties to be overcome in plowing and sowing a virgin soil—in blazing a path to the open, through tangled brush and serpent-haunted thickets. A young heart's fervid enthusiasm sheds a roseate glow over all the rugged deprivations and harsh-featured austerities of a new field of labor for God and souls.

In this exalted spirit, our dear Sister Gonzaga entered upon a work that called forth all her characteristic earnestness and zeal.

Sheltered under the protecting wing of her superiors, guided by their wise judgment and experience, she began to tread the narrow path with joy—although poor child! (she was little more) still beset by tender recollections of her first convent home; and yearning ardently, at times, for the repose of that peaceful haven.

This is evidenced in the following truly spiritual letter, addressed to her adopted mother in

Baltimore, about a month after her arrival at the Harrisburg orphanage :

“ Your affectionate heart, my beloved mother, I trust, will pardon me for not answering your kind letter long before this; but having received it just the day before I made my happy retreat, and changing situations, viz., from St. Joseph’s happy Valley to Harrisburg, it has given me but little opportunity to write. However, I will endeavor to make good use of the time I have. Only pray for me that I may become *a good Sister of Charity*, for now is the time to prove faithful to my vocation—now, will be seen whether I have made good use of all the graces God has so liberally bestowed on me. Although I am here in the midst of the world, I will endeavour to be sensible of the great value I ought to set upon my soul, a temple designed for the habitation of God. Let us take care that nothing of this world intrude itself there, placing our hope in the Lord, and waiting for Him with a firm confidence. He will enter, if He only finds our souls alone and disengaged; alone, having no desire but of His presence; alone, loving only Him. In fine, alone, void of all other will but that of Heaven.

“ How grateful ought I to be to Almighty God, for bringing me to this place to take care of the dear little Orphans—His own dear little ones !—Ah ! dearest mother, could I ever have left that sweet Valley of St. Joseph’s had it not been for God alone? Could all the fair promises of the world have forced me from it? No, I would rather have been torn in pieces than be

snatched from that sweetest Asylum, where oft I had desired to dwell. . . . Adieu, my dearest mother.

“ Your affectionate child,

“ S. MARY GONZAGA.

“ HARRISBURG ASYLUM, May 26, 1828.”

Our young Sister might faithfully have re-echoed the sentiments of another loving exile from Emmitsburg who, in by-gone days, thus touched her Moore-like lyre, and poured forth her rhapsody in melodious rhyme to

“ ST. JOSEPH’S VALLEY.

“ How oft when the pale moon at evening is beaming,

My mind from the cares of this busy world free,
Will stray, as I gaze on the golden stars gleaming,
Loved home of my childhood, St. Joseph’s, to thee!

“ There, resting in beauty, thou silently sleepest,
Thou greenest of valleys in blissful repose;
No sound breaks the air, save the streamlet that
keepeth
Its musical course, singing blithe as it flows.

* * * *

“ Fond memory steals back to hang o’er thy fountain;
I see the white convent just hid by the trees,
And hear, as I roam my old haunts on the mountain,
The tone of the bell floating out on the breeze.

“ How many bright eyes are now closing in slumber,
Within those high walls, I am longing to see ;
And prayers from dear watchers are rising in numbers,
Ah ! is there one whisper breathed forth there for me ? ”

On the twenty-fifth of March, 1830, our young novice made her holy vows in the little Asylum at Harrisburg.

This blessed act of self-immolation set the divine seal upon her highest hopes and happiness. Her girlhood's golden dream was realized. Now, at last, she felt herself to be truly the Spouse of Jesus Christ.

“ I can say with all truth,” writes Sister Mary Joseph, her devoted companion in religion (whose *Notes* have been of untold service to us in the present writing), “ that Sister Gonzaga's love, gratitude and appreciation of this priceless favor were as great at the end of seventy years as when she first consecrated herself to God. That dear heart never grew old, but always kept its childlike freshness and beauty.”

Two months after her profession—in May, 1830—Sister Gonzaga was sent by her superiors to the St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Philadelphia—the first mission from the parent-house established by Mother Seton. This was still located on the property of Adam Primruer on Sixth street, just north of Holy Trinity church.

The Asylum had gradually acquired more ample means, and was enabled to receive and maintain a large number of orphans. The spirit of disinterestedness, the self-sacrificing devotion to the poor little orphans, manifested by the good Sisters, made a deep impression upon all who witnessed their charitable exertions, and won the sympathy and generous aid of a wide circle of friends and patrons.

Sister Rose White was (as we have said) the first Superioress of this house.

Recalled to Emmitsburg, in 1821, to succeed Mother Seton, as head of the order, Sister Xavier became Sister-Servant, in her stead, at the Philadelphia Asylum. She, in her turn, at Mother Rose's death, was made Superioress in St. Joseph's Valley.

Sister Genevieve succeeded her, for a brief space, at the Home on Sixth street, above Spruce. But Sister Petronilla was acting Sister-Servant when our dear young Sister Gonzaga arrived at the Asylum, in 1830. The latter often talked, in her maturer years, of the early days of this foundation, and of the many trials and difficulties attendant on its progress.

Two years after her arrival in Philadelphia, the breaking out of the Asiatic cholera struck terror and dismay to the hearts of our afflicted

people. The Sisters of Charity heroically offered themselves to the service of the plague-stricken. We have still extant (preserved in the Appendix to Rev. Dr. White's *Life of Mother Seton*), the resolutions passed in their regard by the Board of Guardians of the Philadelphia Almshouse, on May twentieth, 1833 :

"At a meeting of the Board of Guardians, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted :

"WHEREAS, A written communication has been received by this Board from the Rev. John Hickey, Superior of the Sisters of Charity, intimating, for reasons therein stated, that it is his intention to recall the Sisters now in the Almshouse, as soon as this Board shall have had time to supply their places; and

WHEREAS, It is proper that some testimony should be borne to the zeal, fidelity, and disinterestedness which these amiable philanthropists have exhibited ; therefore

"*Resolved*, That this body entertain a deep, lasting, and grateful sense of the generous devotedness, the serene and Christian kindness, and the pure and unworldly benevolence which have prompted and sustained the Sisters of Charity attached to this institution during the trying period of pestilence and death, and afterwards, in the midst of constant suffering and disease.

"*Resolved*, That the invaluable services of these

amiable women have been productive of lasting benefit to this institution, in the admirable and energetic measures which they have introduced for the relief and comfort of the sick and afflicted, and entitle them to the warmest thanks and gratitude of the whole community, which has been benefited by their labors.

“Resolved, That this body, in parting from the Sisters of Charity, regret that the rules and habits of the Order to which the Sisters belong do not admit the acceptance of any reward, as it would give them pleasure to bestow such a testimonial as might serve to express the grateful feelings which they entertain.

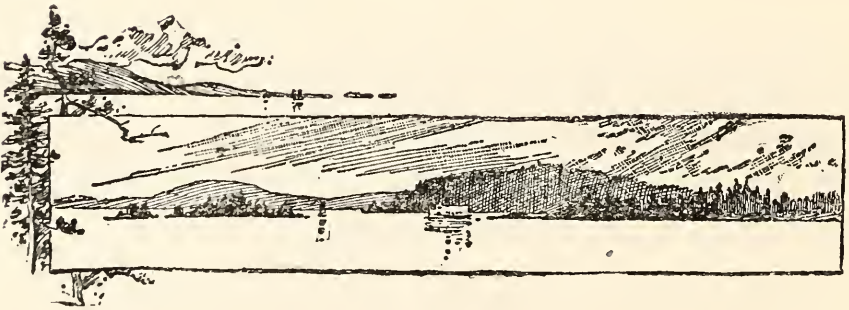
“Resolved, That, in permanent testimony of our feeling in this regard, the above resolutions be recorded in the Minutes of this Board.”—*Niles' Register*, June 1, 1833.

Prior to this, the City Council of Baltimore had adopted like resolutions, particularizing, as follows, the names of the two sainted religious who were martyrs of the plague :

“WHEREAS, Sisters Mary Frances (Boarman) and Mary George (Smith), members of the said Sisterhood (of Charity), while attending the sick in the cholera hospitals in this city, during the prevalence of the late epidemic, fell a sacrifice to, and died in the exercise of these, the noblest principles of social virtue; be it

"Resolved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That, as a memorial of the gratitude of the city, a monument be erected to the memory of the said deceased Sisters, as a record of, and a just tribute to, their exemplary piety, humanity, and self-devotion."—*Baltimore Gazette*, January 26, 1833.

(This monument still stands, we believe, in the Baltimore Cathedral Cemetery.)



VII.

MANY CHANGES AND TRIALS.



IN the year 1832, one who was inexpressibly near and dear to our Sister Gonzaga fell a victim to the cholera in the city of Baltimore.

This was her adopted mother, Elizabeth Michel Heuisler. Death truly loved a shining mark when he leveled his cruel dart at the bosom of this most estimable wife and gifted mother.

The fruit of her happy marriage had been two children—of whom one, named Joseph, died in its infancy. Another son (a second Joseph) survived.

In the golden fullness of her wedded bliss, in the very flower of her useful years, who could have dreamed that the

“Reaper, whose name is Death,”

was about to cut down this loved and loving creature with his unsparing scythe, and rob the household garden of its sweetest, its most fragrant ornament!

On a certain Sunday afternoon, in August, 1832, in company with her husband and her

bosom friend, Miss Margaret Mackey, Elizabeth attended Vespers at the chapel of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore.

She appeared, then, to be in perfect health.

After the service, she and Margaret went to visit Grandfather Heuisler, who lived on a very nice farm in the vicinity. There was an abundance of lovely fruit, in season, on the substantial old premises.

Roaming through the green and sunny grounds, Miss Mackey pressed Elizabeth to eat of some of Grandfather's delicious fruits.

Mrs. Heuisler, who seems to have had a great dread of the cholera, steadfastly refused to eat of the berries, or of anything that might hide in it the germs of the fatal epidemic.

"I will not eat any of it, Margaret," she said, again and again.

Alas! her prudence, her self-denying precautions, were all in vain!

The fell Destroyer lurked, even then, close to her in the golden atmosphere of the old summer garden. While the devoted friends laughed and chatted gayly amid the fruits and flowers, grisly Death, behind the nearest tree, was swiftly fitting the fateful arrow to his bow.

Elizabeth and her companions returned to their peaceful home (Margaret was also its inmate); and retired for the night, unsuspecting the calamitous doom at hand.

In the gray of the early dawn, the household was aroused in awful dismay.

Elizabeth had been stricken with the cholera!

Every known remedy was resorted to to save the precious life at stake. Heaven and its resplendent cohorts of saints were besieged to obtain relief for the beloved one, racked in the agonizing cramps of the pestilence, and dripping with the cold sweats of impending dissolution.

The struggle was a cruelly sharp, but brief, one. The dear sufferer had been seized with the first symptoms of the epidemic at two o'clock in the August morning. At seven—only five short hours later—she was a corpse!

We can well imagine the grief of Sister Gonzaga at the news of this sad bereavement.

Elizabeth had been her visible guardian-angel. To that admirable woman she owed all that had brightened and blessed her life from infancy. Nevertheless, she did not grieve as one without hope.

She well knew that her cherished friend (like Dorcas of old) had gone to God with her hands "full of good works and almsdeeds" — that she was one of those elect souls who, dying,

. . . "leave a memory like the breath
Of summers, full of sunshine and of showers—
A grief and gladness in the atmosphere."

There might be no miraculous deliverer at hand to raise up the beloved Elizabeth, as St. Peter raised the dead Tabitha at Joppe; yet, believing firmly that He who is the Resurrection and the Life, would, one day, call forth the faithful spirit from its rest, and reveal to the world the full beauty of its holiness—our dear young Sister brushed away her tears and addressed herself courageously to the noble work that claimed all the powers of her being.

Through the kindly interest of the good Augustinian Fathers, located then, as now, on north Fourth street, Philadelphia, many legacies were left, from time to time, to St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum.

But it was to the generosity of two noble-souled gentlemen—Mr. Andrew R. Steel and Mr. Joseph Dugan—that the Sisters on Sixth street owed the most munificent amounts bequeathed to them and their institution at that early period.

The bequests of these large-hearted benefactors enabled the Managers to purchase from the Pennsylvania Hospital, more than sixty years ago, the present site of the Asylum, at the southwest corner of Seventh and Spruce streets.

To this new location, the Sisters and their charges removed on the twenty-fourth of October, 1836. The little family then consisted of

fifty-one children and four Sisters—Sister Petronilla, as Sister-Servant, being assisted by Sister Mary John, Sister Theodosia, and our own Sister Gonzaga.

The last, who was destined to be the first, in the course of time, was exceedingly happy in her new mission. She was devoted to the good Sister Petronilla, who, on her part, recognized in her young assistant the many sterling qualities, soon to be developed in a wider sphere of action.

In June, 1843, Sister Gonzaga passed through Baltimore (*en route* to or from Emmitsburg), and visited her adopted father, Mr. George Heuisler. That excellent gentleman, at that date, was married again—his second wife being a Miss Mary Hooper.*

Two months later, on the third of August, 1843, Sister Petronilla slept peacefully in the Lord, resting, at last, from her arduous labors in behalf of His afflicted members. Writing to Mr. George Heuisler, on the seventh of January, 1844, Sister Gonzaga says of this event:

“You know that it was but little more than two months after I saw you in Baltimore, that Almighty

*Seven children were the fruit of this union—the second of whom, and the only one who did not eventually marry, is Sister Mary Joseph, the devoted companion of Sister Gonzaga, and present Sister-Servant of St. Joseph’s Orphan Asylum, Philadelphia.

God, in His mercy, took to Himself my beloved Sister Petronilla ; in her I lost *a second mother*, for she had truly been such to me for more than thirteen years. How grateful should I be to our dear Lord for His continued care in thus watching over me ; for God always bestows abundance of graces on us, if we only return all to Him, and do not prove ungrateful. This, then, must be my constant care, to prove my gratitude to so good a God, lest He withdraw Himself from me.”*

In concluding her letter, she thus apologizes for her infrequent correspondence, and alludes in the humblest terms to her appointment to succeed Sister Petronilla, as head of the house at Seventh and Spruce streets :

“ I hope you do not attribute my silence to want of affection—no, I owe too much to *her* who has long since departed ” (her beloved Elizabeth), “ and for whom I daily pray, not to have the deepest sense of gratitude to you, and love for her own dear offspring, ever to forget you. . . . The truth is, I have always had a great deal to do, and since the death of my beloved Sister Petronilla, the charge of the Asylum has devolved upon me, so that I now have more than ever (to do). But Almighty God, who has placed me

* The original of this letter reached us, recently, through the kindness of Mr. Joseph Heuisler, sole surviving son of the late Elizabeth Michel and George Anthony Heuisler, now engaged in mining interests in Santiago, Chile.

in the situation, will, by His grace, assist me, I trust, in the discharge of the arduous duty—you know I never sought for it; I was too conscious of the obligations, and well knew my incapacity.”

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday, the third of August, that Sister Petronilla had breathed her last. She was wasted by a long and painful illness, yet had retained her faculties unclouded to the moment of death—exhibiting to the end that gentle submission to the divine will that had characterized her all through life.

Lingering as had been her illness—the last six months having been naught but an hourly struggle against death—when she lay at rest in the Asylum chapel, exposed in her simple coffin, her pale, emaciated features assumed their wonted peaceful expression; and to those who gazed upon them in the soft radiance of the altar-lamps, they might well have suggested the consoling words of the Apostle: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; from henceforth now, they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them.”

On Saturday, feast of our Lady of the Snows, the pure remains of this spouse of Christ were conveyed from the Asylum chapel, to St. Mary's church, south Fourth street, where, at the close

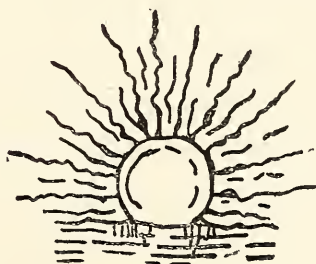
of the Holy Sacrifice, Rt. Rev. Bishop Kenrick gave a brief but touching tribute to the memory of the deceased.

The morning was a stormy one, but the body of the dear Sister, so prized because of her meek saintliness, was attended to the grave by nearly all the Catholic clergy then in the city; by the Sisters of Charity from the different institutions; by her own dear orphans at St. Joseph's Asylum; and by a multitude of lay people whom the inclemency of the weather did not deter from paying this last tribute of respect to the beloved Sister Petronilla.

Her remains were interred in the burial-vault of Holy Trinity church-yard, Sixth and Spruce streets, Philadelphia, wherein already reposed the ashes of two other daughters of St. Vincent de Paul.

A journalistic writer of that day, commenting upon the obsequies of the deceased Sister, pertinently remarked: "To the departed, and to such as her, whether in religious communities or living in the world, our thoughts immediately reverted on reading in the last number of the *British Critic* the truthful observation: 'The Church of God is helped by nought so much as by the secret prayers and intercessions of holy souls.' And again, that other remark quoted in the same Protestant journal,

from a Catholic writer, 'Some pure and humble soul, unknown to men, or, perchance, despised by them, often saves the city, the province, or the country in which she lives. And how does she save them? By her love for God—her sufferings, her prayers.' When men, still without the pale of the Church," concludes our Catholic journalist, "come to hold such views with regard to the efficacy of prayer and the priceless value of the Religious Life, well may Catholics learn with what love, and gratitude, and reverence, they should look upon these holy institutions, and upon those whom God has called to serve Him in them."



VIII.

THE PHILADELPHIA RIOTS AND OTHER VICISSITUDES IN OUR SISTER'S LIFE.



ISTER PETRONILLA had controlled the interests of St. Joseph's Orphanage for about twenty years when she was called to her reward. In those fruitful decades the Asylum had prospered greatly, continuing to improve and increase from year to year.

This, under heaven, was mainly due to the maternal tenderness, calm foresight, prudent economy and meek reliance upon Providence of Sister Petronilla, in her government of the many young souls, with their corps of Sisters, intrusted to her care.

Trained in the school of this model religious, Sister Gonzaga, although the last and least of her assistants, was well fitted by nature and grace to succeed her in the office of Superioress.

But, alas! the young spiritual sovereign came to her own at a most trying period of Philadelphia's history—at an alarmingly troublous time, when ignorant prejudice and bigotry had

forcibly dethroned right reason and justice among a certain contingent of our people.

The anti-Catholic Riots of 1844 have left a fiery brand of shame and horrid reproach upon the fair annals of our city of Brotherly Love.

Sister Gonzaga was really more of a *Native American* than many of the turbulent, sacrilegious mob, who brawled and shouted and surged through our streets those spring-tide days, blatantly usurping the title that belonged alone and legitimately to the red men of our primeval forest.

Child of a United States marine, born in war-time, on Washington's birthday, and rocked in the very cradle of American religious liberty, this dear dove of peace seemed destined, from time to time, all through her life, to spread her snow-white wings, and flutter her fair plumage amid the din and smoke of battle.

During that reign of terror of '44, worthy of the French *Commune* in some of its mad excesses—when Roman Catholic churches were burned or threatened, and when priests and religious were forced to hide themselves or go about (if they dared do so) in disguise—Sister Gonzaga naturally feared for the safety of her Community and her orphan charges.

Writing, at this time, to her Superioress, Mother Xavier, at Emmitsburg, she thus expresses her natural anxiety for the outcome of the riots:

“ST. JOSEPH’S ASYLUM, PHILADELPHIA,
“May 9th, 1844, midnight.

“MY BELOVED MOTHER :—Perhaps before this letter shall have reached you, many of your poor children and their orphans may be launched into eternity, called to appear in the presence of their God and their Judge without a moment’s preparation. We are in the midst of frightful dangers ; a great portion of our peaceful city is the scene of dreadful riot and bloodshed : two of our churches burned to the ground, St. Michael’s up in Kensington this afternoon, and St. Augustine’s about half-past nine to-night. St. John’s has been guarded since Monday night, and St. Mary’s is now surrounded by a strong detachment of the military, besides a patrol. St. Joseph’s and Holy Trinity, as well as St. Mary’s churches have removed all the Sacred Vessels, Vestments, etc., into private houses ; the clergymen have left their dwellings, the Bishop his house, the priests and students have deserted the Seminary, every one seeking a night’s lodging in the family of some friends. Three police officers now guard our Asylum, and we know not at what moment our dear little ones must be roused from their peaceful slumbers to fly for their lives. Threats have been made positively to destroy St. John’s church to-night ; and, in consequence, the poor Sisters and Orphans have been obliged to retire to some good families for a shelter, because if the church were burned the Asylum would certainly catch.

“Several citizens have kindly offered us also to bring our children to their houses, but we cannot

bear the thought of scattering them unless we were sure of imminent danger. The Managers think that it can't be possible that the mob could be so reckless as to attack helpless female orphans.

"Last night, we did not close our eyes till two o'clock; and now it is near that, and we are watching still.

"Sr. Albina and Sr. Eusebius are here from St. John's. They were afraid the firemen might get excited in case there were danger, and they concluded we were safe down here. God grant it may be so. I am fearful it will be worse, to-morrow night. The military are out on duty, but it seems of no use. They have burned whole rows of houses, and shot many as they passed along.

"The commencement of the disturbance was chiefly this: Many of the citizens had assembled to adopt some resolutions with regard to political affairs, when some Irish Catholic insulted them, and made such a noise that the speaker could not be heard. One word brought on another, until a battle ensued. The truth is, it is nothing but a party of Protestants leagued against the Catholics, under the names of Native Americans and the Irish.

"It is believed to be actually more religion than politics which is the cause of the riot. Do pray very hard, Mother; for what will become of us if the Asylum were attacked? How could we escape with ninety-nine children, seventy of whom would not be able to assist themselves even out of the mob? And, as they have sworn vengeance against all the churches

and their institutions, we have every reason to expect the same fate.

"Five o'clock a. m. We are safe yet, thank God!

"Nine o'clock. A little quiet. The Governor has issued proclamation that the mob be fired on—this, it seems, will be likely to put a stop to the riot.

"Adieu, dear Mother ; pray for your poor distressed children.

"SR. M. GONZAGA.

"To Mother Xavier."

St. John's Male Orphanage, as will be seen from this, was then located on Chestnut street, near Thirteenth; and, together with the Depository for the sale of the orphans' handiwork, was close to St. John's old church.

It may not be out of place to relate, just here, that when our local Catholic historian, Mr. Martin Griffin, in 1891, was about inserting a copy of the above letter in his *American Catholic Historical Researches*, he supposed, in his innocence (as he has informed us), that the writer of a letter in 1844 must then, a half-century later, be no longer in the land of the living. Accordingly, he wrote to St. Joseph's Asylum, asking the date of Mother Gonzaga's death.

What was his surprise and pleasure to receive, from our venerable heroine, the following letter, penned in her own still beautiful hand-

writing, and giving him practical assurance that she was then very much alive, indeed, and in the full possession of her faculties !

“ ST. JOSEPH’S ASYLUM, March 13, 1891.

“ MR. GRIFFIN :—You will be surprised perhaps to learn that Sister Mary Gonzaga is still living and in good health at present ; although I was quite sick lately.

“ I suppose you do not need the letter written by me in 1844.

“ May I ask how that letter came into your hands ? —as I did not keep a copy of it. It was written to Mother Xavier at Emmitsburg, the Mother of St. Joseph’s Academy at that place, and also Mother of the Sisters of Charity in the United States.

“ I do not know that I can add anything worthy of note about the Riots, for the ‘ HISTORICAL SOCIETY.’

“ The enclosed came here, this morning, from Emmitsburg to Sister Mary Joseph, present Superior of the Asylum.

“ Respectfully,

“ SISTER MARY GONZAGA.”

In the latter part of the stormy year (1844), Sister Gonzaga was sent from Philadelphia to Donaldsonville, Louisiana, to fill the responsible post of Assistant to the Novitiate of the Sisters of Charity, there established for the convenience of Southern postulants.

In the following year, she was transferred to New Orleans. During her stay at the Gulf city, the question of formally affiliating Mother Seton's Community to the French society, known as the DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, began again to be agitated, in 1849.

This union had first been proposed and contemplated by the holy Foundress at Emmitsburg, in 1810; and arrangements had actually been made, at that date, to send a detachment of Sisters from France, to form the new community in St. Joseph's Valley to the spirit of the French Sisters of Charity. Owing, however, to obstacles thrown in the way of the project by the government of Bonaparte, the French Sisters could not obtain passports to America, and the pious enterprise had to be abandoned.

Bishop Flaget obtained, as we have already said, for Mother Seton's daughters, a copy of the Rule observed by St. Vincent's Sisterhood in France; and there the matter rested.

All through the year 1849, the project of affiliation was actively discussed and proposed. Sister Gonzaga was warmly in favor of the movement, and worked earnestly in her own sphere to bring it about.

Early in the year of grace, 1850, the union

of the Emmitsburg Sisters with the French Sisters of Charity was definitely and decisively effected; and, on the twenty-fifth of March, 1850, our Sisters renewed their vows for the first time with the formula used by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

To St. Joseph's Asylum, Philadelphia, Sister Gonzaga returned from Louisiana on March nineteenth, 1851; on that patronal feast of the house, resuming her former charge.

Something less than nine months later, occurred another very notable event in the annals of the Community.

The Emmitsburg Sisterhood signalized, that year, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (December the eighth), by assuming the ancient habit and white *cornette* (or peculiar head-gear) of St. Vincent's original Daughters of Charity, founded in 1633, by Louise de Marillac (Mlle. Le Gras).

This (now) world-wide Society forms, in this country, a province with an ecclesiastical superior of the Lazarist Order, who is termed the DIRECTOR OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY. The chief Sister, who is known as VISITATRIX OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY, is also local Superior of the central house at Emmitsburg.

In 1855, Sister Gonzaga was sent to the Mother-House in Paris, where she remained a

year, obtaining and imparting much valuable information regarding the work of the American community.

She often dwelt tenderly, in later days, upon the happy period when she was the guest of her foreign Sisters in their olden quarters of the Rue de Bac; and delighted to narrate, to her little community, pleasant reminiscences of events that transpired whilst she was honored and privileged to abide under the roof of the cherished Mother-House in France.

Had it been permitted her, she would have joyed to revisit, in after years, that hallowed spot, so dear to her loyal heart.

But her first and only sojourn in Paris was destined to be of short duration.

In May, 1856, our good Sister returned to the United States, going to St. Joseph's, Emmitsburg, where, for a year, she filled the office of Procuratrix.

She came back to Philadelphia in the year 1857; and there, was appointed, for the third time, to take charge of "her old love" (as the Sisters were accustomed to style it)—the Orphan Asylum at Seventh and Spruce streets. It seemed to be, indeed, as a powerful magnet, always drawing her towards its sacred precincts, no matter how often or how far she might be destined to wander from it.

IX.

QUIET DAYS AT THE ASYLUM BEFORE THE WAR.

PEACEFUL and profitable were the five years following Sister Gonzaga's return to St. Joseph's Asylum.

In that congenial sphere, she lived and labored quietly until the outbreak of the Civil War—moving so noiselessly about her duties, that her gentle voice or footsteps were seldom heard.

To some, this may seem an easy and natural state of affairs in a quiet haven for rescued little ones, whose tender helplessness appeals even to indifferent hearts.

Casual observers look upon the calm face and composed movements of the tried Religious, conducting the well-disciplined school, leading the long procession of demure and decorous orphans through our streets, or presiding over a lovely chapel filled with neat, subdued, tiny creatures, kneeling with folded hands, or rising to sing the praises of God, like little angels, at Mass or Benediction.

They know nothing of the inner workings of the Home—of the daily, hourly trials and repugnances of the good Sisters, moulding into

consistent Christians the little wilful beings under their charge.

It is not of every Daughter of Charity that it can be said, as it was of Sister Martha d'Auteuil (one of the first companions of Mlle. Le Gras), that "the most repulsive exhaled for her the perfume of roses;" nor can all be like to Sister Andrea (of the same epoch), who, in the agony of death, told St. Vincent that her "*only remorse was to have too much enjoyed the service of the poor!*"

Grace does not ordinarily thus annihilate the repugnances of nature; and the immense merit and reward of those who toil in ungrateful fields of charitable labor, are due not to their happy insensibility to annoyances, discouragements, or disgusts, but to their heroic mastery of the promptings of the flesh.

In our orphanages and reformatories, the children are, oftentimes, the offspring of misery and vice. Heredity, or early evil environments, have left their baleful seals upon the bodies and souls of these poor little wayward waifs.

Prosperous mothers, in well-regulated, comfortable homes, often complain of the care and anxiety attendant upon the rearing of their own half-dozen, or less, of troublesome children. They continually bewail the weary days and wakeful nights consumed in the service of

the dear little ones, whose claim upon their devotedness is the closest and tenderest ever known to the daughters of Eve.

Let such consider the lot of the Spouse of Christ, of the Sister of Charity, of the barren woman whom God hath made "the joyful"—too often, alas! sorrowful—"mother of many children."

Hundreds of vexing little ones are to be cared for by her—are to be fed, and cleansed, and clothed, and taught, in the monotonous routine of Asylum-life. Her unflagging labors, her heavy responsibilities, are all unsoothed, unsweetened by any tie of blood or nature. She toils, day and night, for the children of others—for the progeny of people unknown to her, or known, usually, it is to be feared, only in their wretched vices, their neglect, abuse, or gross violation of their parental duties and obligations.

Naught save divine love, alone, could support the pure, gentle, refined Sister, in circumstances and occupations so arduous to her weakness, so repellent to her delicacy, so discouraging to any but a God-like patience and tender pity.

That genuine, long-suffering love of Christ and His little ones burned brightly in the breast of our dear Sister Gonzaga.

"She was, indeed" (and this is the testimony of the Sister who lived longest and most inti-

mately with her), "a model of every virtue; always humble, simple, obedient; seeing God alone in those who commanded her. I am sure St. Vincent never had a more devoted daughter.

"Constantly impressed with the presence of God, to look at her was sufficient to inspire us with holy recollection. If, as it sometimes happened, we raised our voices too high, our dear Sister, regarding us, would place her finger on her lips. This sufficed to recall us to recollection, without a word having been said.

"She was thought by some," continues this devoted convent-chronicler, "too rigid upon the head of Religious Poverty. She instilled into the young Sisters a love of this virtue, often telling us how it was practised in the early days of the Community—'those happy days,' she called them, 'when all hearts were so united, and all rejoiced alike in privations.'

"On one occasion, our dear Sister was called to the parlor, expecting to return in a few moments. She left her little gas-stove burning; but was detained in the parlor, first, by one, then by another. She was so distressed by this waste, that *she did without a fire for one week!* She said it was only just that she should thus punish herself."

The children of the Asylum loved her very much, especially the little ones, who were very

dear to her warm heart. In their baby fashion, they called her "*Mamma Gonnie*"; and she was, indeed, a true mother, in every sense of the word, to all within the walls of the Home, great and small.

Writes one of her dear companions: "No matter at what time a Sister would go to her for advice, or to settle some childish difficulty, she was always sure of receiving a gentle welcome."

(This recalls an incident in the life of Mother Seton, at Emmitsburg, who when one of her spiritual daughters apologized to her for intruding on her privacy too often, replied in these beautiful and gracious words: "The sunbeams are not more welcome through my windows than is the sound of your well-known footstep at my door.")

"No matter what you might tell to her, your secret was as safe as that of the confessional. My confidence in her was unbounded," says a Sister. "Many a time when I felt afraid to approach the Holy Communion, I would go to her and say, 'Sister Gonzaga, I fear to receive our Lord in the morning.' Then, I would tell her what I had done. She would listen patiently, and always said, 'Go to our dearest Lord! You need him. Never let the devil keep you from Holy Communion. How can we perform the

duties of our precious vocation without our Holy Communions? It would be impossible; we could not persevere.' ”

Among the many children who claimed Sister Gonzaga's tender care and devoted affection during these years in the late 'Fifties, were two, who elicited her special sympathy and interest.

These were Lizzie Duffy and Katie Moriarty, whose little histories contain a touch of genuine romance.

Frequenters of the Asylum, forty years ago, were familiar with the sight of Lizzie Duffy, the little hunchback, who, though a woman in age, was ever a mere child in size and appearance. In her short hair, and gingham pinafore; in her wise innocence, and prudent usefulness, Lizzie seemed to recall some of the “little women ” whom the facile pen of Charles Dickens has created and immortalized.

She was placed at St. Joseph's Asylum when but four years old. Her poor little back was deformed when she came, possibly from a fall when an infant; for she was motherless.

After she had made her first Holy Communion, Sister Gonzaga sent for Lizzie's father, and told him, when he responded to her call, that his little daughter was at last of an age

to leave the Home. She had been well instructed, and strengthened by the holy Sacraments; he was now free to take her home with him, that she might prove the joy and comfort of his declining years.

The man made some awkward excuse. He could not take the child with him, just then. He would return another day for the little deformed one, who regarded him, the author of her hapless being, with hungry, wistful eyes—yearning for some sign of a father's loving tenderness.

He never came again.

The young cripple shed many bitter tears at the disappointment. She had a loyal, loving little heart; and she grieved, almost morbidly, over her father's neglect.

"No one wants a deformed child!" she would exclaim, in the cruel realization of her crooked back and dwarf-like unseemliness.

"*I want you, Lizzie,*" Sister Gonzaga would consolingly reply: "I shall always be a mother to you. Whilst I am Sister-Servant in this house, it shall always be your home. Never mind what others say or do—you shall always be *my* child."

Lizzie's chief fear, after that, was that Sister Gonzaga would die before her—that she might be left to depend upon the uncertain mercies and tenure of a new Superioress.

As the years wore on, the little hunchback became a wonderfully useful and responsible girl. She was intrusted with the care and instruction of some of the younger orphans; and most conscientiously fulfilled her little duties to them.

Having manifested considerable musical talent, Lizzie, at Sister's kind suggestion, was taught to play upon the cabinet organ by Madame Poissat, a charming old French lady, who then kept a refined *pension* on Spruce street, near Seventh.

Madame was, for many years, the organist of the Asylum chapel—Sister Gonzaga thus considerably helping to eke out the limited income of one who (it was said) in better days, in *la belle France*, had once lived in wealth and luxury. Her little pupil profited well by her instructions; and all were pleased when Lizzie Duffy could play correctly enough to accompany the children in their simple hymns; and, occasionally, take Madame's place at the organ for Mass or Benediction.

X.

FLIGHT OF TWO PURE YOUNG SOULS TO GOD.



THE hunchback's last effort in this line was a rehearsal of the little Asylum-singers in a hymn for the expected funeral of a dying child of the house—a hymn which (curious to relate) was sung, in the end, at Lizzie Duffy's own obsequies.

Contrary to all expectations, she had lived to the mature age of thirty-one years.

She was still a child in heart and in stature, however, when her last sickness came upon her.

It did not seem to be a serious attack; and Sister Gonzaga thought her dear little cripple to be in no immediate danger.

But Lizzie, always precociously wise, had a strong premonition of the end. She begged those about her to send for her confessor, who was also the spiritual director of the Sisterhood.

Sister Gonzaga reminded her how short had been the time—only a couple of days—since her last confession.

But Lizzie insisted, urging a recent singular vision as the cause of her anxiety.

She had dreamed, she said, that she was in the great attic-room of the Asylum, sorting rags. (Sister Gonzaga's thrift made use of every scrap for the manufacture of her neat, old-fashioned rag-carpets.) As she worked, she became conscious of innumerable slips of paper lying scattered about on the floor. On each, to her surprise and consternation, Lizzie had read some sin of her past life. A complete record of the shortcomings of her entire career was there, outspread, before her.

"If you send for the priest," said she to Sister, "I can make a general confession of my whole life from what I read upon those slips of paper."

Sister, at once (seeing the child's earnestness), sent for the priest. It was the Rev. Gerald P. Coghlan, now Rector of the Church of our Lady of Mercy, but then assistant to the late Rev. Michael F. Martin at St. Mary's, south Fourth street.

To Father Coghlan, Lizzie made her general confession—telling him all her sins, or

"what her all but utter whiteness took for sins,"
(as the poet hath it).

The priest came out from the sick-room, lifting up his hands with an almost admiring envy. He declared that this little creature had never lost her baptismal innocence.

Lizzie expired happily a little later; and Father Coghlan, returning to the Rectory at St. Mary's, told Father Martin that he had just come from giving the last Sacraments to a little child at the Asylum.

The astonishment of both pastor and curate may be imagined when the burial certificate revealed, the next day, the astounding fact that the little short-haired "child," with the sinlessness of a baptized babe, had really been an adult woman of thirty-one years.

Peace to thy gentle memory, little Lizzie Duffy!—a bright, glad home in the Father's House for thee, whom an earthly father abandoned and rejected, and whom our beloved Sister took to her bosom, as a wounded lamb, and lovingly prepared for thy dreamless rest in the white, eternal Fold of the Good Shepherd!

Sister lived to be able to say, in thy regard:

"Sweet as the tender fragrance which survives
When martyred flowers breathe out their little lives;
Sweet as a song which once consoled our pain,
But never will be sung to us again,
Is thy remembrance."

We have spoken of the dying child for whose anticipated funeral Lizzie Duffy, in her last days, rehearsed a choral hymn.

That child was Katie Moriarty.

She was an entire orphan; admitted to the Asylum (as Lizzie Duffy had been) at the tender age of four. She grew into a beautiful, graceful girl; but, with her growth, developed a marvelous devotion to the Sisters and the Orphanage, only surpassed by her overweening fear of the great, unknown world, outside those sheltering walls.

It is the custom of the house to secure suitable situations for the older children (either with their own kindred, if any there be, or among responsible Catholics) whenever they have made their first Holy Communion.

Katie, knowing this, was thrown, each May-tide, into a pitiable state of dread and suffering expectancy.

"It will be my turn next!" she would whisper to her troubled heart, when, one by one, the companions of her own age went their way, each year, to new, strange homes, shedding floods of bitter tears, as they sobbed farewell to Sister, schoolmates, and the old, familiar scenes.

At such times, the sensitive child would fling herself on her knees before Sister Gonzaga, and, lifting her clasped hands, implore her not to send her, also, forth into the world.

Her singular emotion and devotedness moved and impressed Sister. The girl was in her teens—she was old enough, and well enough in-

structed, to try her wings in a new and wider sphere; and yet, in the face of her strange forebodings, Sister had not the heart to thrust her forth from the nest, as relentless mother-birds, their fledglings.

Outside the Asylum-walls, during all the years of her abode there, Katie Moriarty seemed to have no relative or friend who was interested in her welfare.

But, one day, a surprising incident occurred in this regard.

Father Abram Ryan, the late distinguished poet-priest of the South, called at St. Joseph's Asylum, and asked for an interview with the Sister-Servant. When Sister Gonzaga received him in the parlor, he told her that he was the bearer of a message to a child of her house from a gentleman in the far West.

The child's name, he said, was Katie Moriarty, and the gentleman, who was her uncle, was the proprietor of a large hotel in a Western city, through which the priest had recently journeyed. The hotel-keeper had instructed Father Ryan to visit St. Joseph's Asylum, Philadelphia, and arrange to bring Katie back with him when he returned (as he purposed doing) to the West.

Sister Gonzaga listened to it all with her accustomed quiet placidity and self-control.

"I will send Katie to speak with you,

Father," was her gentle comment, as she quitted the room to seek the shrinking child.

With many misgivings, Katie obeyed her true mother's request, and glided into the parlor to meet the waiting priest.

He looked with interest at the tall, beautiful child, of whom any parent might have been proud. Her delicate loveliness was already stamped with the seal of an early decline; her fair cheek revealed the hectic bloom of

"the rose whose root is Death."

Here, was a tender flower to be transplanted to an atmosphere of rich and encircling affection—to be sheltered and strengthened, ever more, in the hothouse of a devoted uncle's love.

Father Ryan told her all. He pictured to her the advantages of her uncle's prosperous home—of the joy, the comfort, she might bring to his solitary years—of the warm and liberal affection that would be lavished on her as the daughter of the house.

The child looked steadily at the reverend speaker—her sensitive lips quivering, her soft eyes filling with great tears:

"Father," she said, brokenly, "my uncle has never done anything for me in the past. The

Sisters have done everything. I would rather stay where I am than go to my uncle!"

"God bless you, my child!" cried Father Ryan heartily; "I am glad to hear you say those words. You have chosen well. Remain with the Sisters, and always prove your gratitude to them for their goodness to you."

Katie hastened away from the parlor to Sister Gonzaga's arms, there to repose, happy as a bird in a wild-wood nest, that has just escaped the gilded cage of an intending captor.

Lovely, favored child! She only lived to be seventeen—dying of lingering consumption in her beloved Asylum, about three months after the death of her friend, little Lizzie Duffy.

While these dear snow-white doves of Sister Gonzaga were pluming their flight to the everlasting joys and peace of Paradise, our beloved country was beginning to pass through a dark and terrible ordeal.

The distant mutterings of War had commenced to penetrate into the peaceful seclusion of St. Joseph's Asylum, even as the far-off rumblings of the approaching thunder-storm make themselves heard in the restful green of a sunny valley.

Long-existing differences between the Northern and Southern States of our great Republic—notably, the proposed abolition of Slavery

and emancipation of the negroes of the South, with other grave political issues, arising in the first term of President Lincoln's administration—soon precipitated what is known in our national history as the CIVIL WAR.

The echoes of the first gun fired at Fort Sumter had not ceased reverberating throughout our land, when the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church were called upon (as in all past periods of pestilence and warfare) to hasten to the relief of the sick and wounded soldiers of the Republic.

"The beginning of the Civil War," says Mr. George Barton, in his admirable volume, *The Angels of the Battlefield*, "was to mark one of the most eventful epochs in the career of Sister Gonzaga, and to develop her extraordinary gifts and qualities of administration."

Before giving to our readers the interesting pages of an edifying journal kept by Sister Gonzaga and her assistants at Satterlee Hospital, Philadelphia, during a most memorable period in our country's history, it is gratifying to insert, just here, the tributes of several non-Catholic pens to the loving devotion and heroism of these noble Daughters of St. Vincent.

The following is from a secular paper of St. Joseph, Missouri, and is an extract from a speech delivered there by Captain Crawford, known, in old days, as the *Poet-Scout* :

“On all of God’s green and beautiful earth, there are no purer, no nobler, no more kind-hearted and self-sacrificing women than those who wear the sombre garb of Catholic Sisters. During the war, I had many opportunities for observing their noble and heroic work, not only in the camp and hospital, but in the death-swept field of battle. Right in the fiery front of dreadful war, where bullets hissed in maddening glee, and shot and shell flew wildly by with demoniac shrieks, where dead and mangled forms lay with pale, blood-flecked faces, yet wearing the scowl of battle, I have seen the black-robed Sisters moving over the field, their solicitous faces wet with the tears of sympathy, administering to the wants of the wounded, and whispering words of comfort into the ears soon to be deafened by the cold, implacable hand of death. Now, kneeling on the blood-bespattered sod to moisten with water the bloodless lips on which the icy kiss of the death angel left its pale imprint; now, breathing words of hope of an immortality beyond the grave, into the ear of some mangled hero whose last shots in our glorious cause had been sent but a moment before; now, holding the crucifix to receive the last kiss from somebody’s darling boy, from whose breast the life-blood was splashing, and who had offered his life as a willing sacrifice on the altar of his country; now, with tender touch and tear-dimmed eyes, binding gaping wounds from which most men would have shrunk in horror; now, scraping together a pillow of forest-leaves upon which some pain-racked head might rest until the spirit took

its flight to other realms—brave, fearless of danger, trusting implicitly in the Master whose overshadowing eye was noting their every movement; standing as shielding, prayerful angels between the dying soldier and the horrors of death—their only recompense, the sweet, soul-soothing consciousness that they were doing their duty; their only hope of reward, that peace and eternal happiness which awaited them beyond the star-emblazoned battlements above. Ah! my friends, it was a noble work.

“How many a veteran of the war, who wore the Blue or Gray, can yet recall the soothing touch of a Sister’s hand, as he lay upon the pain-tossed couch of a hospital! Can we ever forget their sympathetic eyes, their low, soft-spoken words of encouragement when the result of the struggle between life and death yet hung in the balance? Oh! how often have I followed the form of that good Sister Valencia with my sunken eyes, as she moved away from my cot to the cot of another sufferer, and have breathed from the most sacred depths of my faintly-beating heart the fervent prayer, ‘God bless her! God bless her!’

“My friends, I am not a Catholic, but I stand ready at any and at all times to defend those noble women, even with my life, for I owe that life to them.”

The *Philadelphia Daily News* of June 11, 1891, thus recalled Steward Bulkley’s reminiscences of his experiences at Satterlee Hospital during the Civil War:

“Those brave fellows, who had shown wonderful courage on the battlefield, showed even greater bravery on their beds of pain at the hospital. They never complained, and seemed grateful that, at last, they had gained comfortable quarters. And now, allow me to refer to the female nurses, who worked untiringly to aid the sufferers. Too much cannot be said in their praise. There were fifty-six Sisters of Charity on duty, under the charge of the late SISTER GONZAGA, who, after the war, was made Mother Superior of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, at the corner of Seventh and Spruce streets. That most noble Christian woman, together with those self-sacrificing co-workers, ready at any moment of the day or night to stand by the bed of the sick, carefully nursing them and carrying out the orders of the physicians in charge, will live in the memory of every lover of the Union.

“They were, indeed, angels of mercy. Two of them had seen service during the Crimean war, and, regarding these, let me relate an interesting incident: On one occasion, smallpox had broken out in the hospital, and five large wall tents were erected in a remote portion of the ground for the reception of those who had been attacked by the dread disease. Before the arrangements were quite completed, one of those noble women asked to be placed in charge of the stricken patients. We all respected them, and we grew to love them for their kind acts. Although I differed from them in their religious views, I have always said, and I repeat it now, ‘God bless those noble women and their society!’

“Never have I seen or heard a soldier offering them the slightest insult. Wherever they went in the hospital, they carried good cheer with them, and they never visited a sick or wounded comrade without giving him good cause to feel encouraged. Whenever a Sister passed by a soldier, he always bowed or raised his cap out of respect for her mission, and admiration for her faithful conduct.”

One more extract, and that from the tribute of Mr. James E. McLane, of Philadelphia (a veteran of the One Hundred and Forty-second Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers), when he learned, in 1897, of Mother Gonzaga's passing away to her eternal reward:

“Many an old veteran will shed tears when he hears of her death. Mother Gonzaga was a mother to about fifty thousand soldiers in the Satterlee United States General Army Hospital at Forty-fourth and Pine streets during the years from 1862 to 1865. I am not of the same religion, but those who were under her care, no matter what their creed, when they recall the midnight visits of Mother Gonzaga, as we called her, her silent steps after ‘taps’ and dim gaslight, would at once recognize the familiar countenance, surrounded by that white-winged head-dress. First, she would bend over the sufferer in order to hear his faintest whisper, and then, when some restless patient would toss off the covers, she would, in the gentlest manner possible, restore them to their proper places

and soothe the wounded man with the softest and most convincing words of cheer. 'They were all her 'children,' her 'boys,' and I am glad to say that I have never yet heard of one of her patients who has forgotten what he owed her. She administered medicine when it was required, she loosened a bandage or replaced the same, watched a delirious man whenever it was necessary, and did everything that a modest, faithful Christian woman could do. She was always calm and ready. In fact, she was a ministering angel, and when physicians, surgeons and all human aid failed, she did her part as only she could do it."

With this tender eulogy to our beloved Sister, from a strange, non-Catholic pen, we shall pass to the perusal of those pages—of that touching Diary—wherein her own spiritual daughters record the lights and shades of hospital-life, in the bloody days of the Civil War.

XI.

BEGINNING OF LIFE AT SATTERLEE HOSPITAL*

N the twenty-fifth of May, 1862, a requisition was made by Surgeon-General Hammond, through Dr. I. J. Hayes, for twenty-five Sisters of Charity, to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers in the West Philadelphia Hospital—afterwards known as the Satterlee Hospital, in honor of General Satterlee.

It was situated between Spruce and Pine Streets, and extended from Fortieth Street to Forty-fourth street. Dr. Hayes (of Arctic-exploration fame) was appointed Surgeon-in-Charge.

“The Hospital being as yet unfinished, the services of the Sisters were not required immediately, but we were requested to hold our-

* This Journal, kept by the Sisters at Satterlee, appeared in December, 1897, in the *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* (edited by the late Miss S. T. Smith). The same year—that of Sister Gonzaga’s death—it was again published in Mr. George Barton’s *Angels of the Battlefield*. We reproduce it here, because many of our readers may not have perused it before ; but chiefly, because no memoir of our dear Sister’s life would be complete without it.

selves in readiness to repair thither at twenty-four hours' notice, and Dr. Hayes, wishing to have us on the spot to make preparations, set the date for the ninth of June. Accordingly, twenty-two Sisters arrived at 10 a. m., on that day.

"The place was so large that we could not find the entrance. The workmen looked at us in amazement, thinking, perhaps, that we belonged to 'the flying artillery.' After stepping over bricks and mortar, pipes, etc., we were ushered into an immense ward, while a good Irishman went in search of the Surgeon-in-Charge. He and his staff welcomed us and showed us to our quarters, and desired us to order dinner to suit ourselves.

"He then showed us through the Hospital, of which but eight wards were finished. The full number, when completed, was thirty-three, each accommodating seventy-five patients comfortably, with his separate table and chair.

"Attached to each ward, were two small rooms; one for the chief nurse, the other for the Sisters to keep medicines, little delicacies, etc., at hand. The Hospital grounds covered an area of fifteen acres, giving our sick ample space to rove about and recreate themselves.

"At 12 m. we repaired to the kitchen for

dinner, and we could not help smiling when we saw the tea served in wash pitchers, and the meat and potatoes in basins. There was neither knife, nor fork, nor spoon. Upon asking for them, the cook answered that he had only four for the officers' use, but as they did not dine until later, he could lend them to us. We used them in turn.

"By the time we had finished dinner, we found they were bringing in some sick—about one hundred and fifty. All went to work to prepare some nourishment for the poor fellows, who looked at us in amazement, not knowing what manner of beings we were. But, among them, was a French soldier, named Pierre, who recognized the DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY. When the patients found the Sisters waiting on them so kindly, they eagerly gave all the assistance in their power.

"In a short time, the number of our sick had increased to nine hundred, many of them very ill with typhoid fever, severe camp fever, chronic dysentery, etc.

"On the sixteenth of August, over fifteen hundred sick and wounded soldiers were brought to the Hospital, most of them from the battle of Bull Run.

"Many had died on the way from exhaustion, others were in a dying state, so that the chap-

lain, Father McGrane,* was sent to administer the Sacraments.

We at once furnished them with good beef-essence, wines, broths, and other delicacies which might revive them, or which they fancied. Of these, we had an abundant supply in our Donation Room, supplied by charitable ladies, as well as by the Sanitary Commission, Christian Commission, and Pennsylvania Relief Association.

“The wards being now crowded, tents were erected to accommodate over one thousand. We had, at one time, not less than four thousand five hundred in the Hospital. When we first went to Satterlee, our own quarters were very limited. We had one small room, about seven feet square, which served as a chapel; another, somewhat larger, answered the purpose of dormitory by night, and community room by day.

“When we had Mass, there was only room for a few Sisters to remain inside, and at the time for Holy Communion, these were obliged to come out, in order that those outside might have their turn to receive. It was beautiful to see our dear sick kneeling around the door and on the stairs. The maimed, the lame and the

*The Catholic chaplain of the Hospital, who so faithfully and generously gave time, thought, prayers, and the ministrations of the Church to the sufferers in the Hospital, was Rev. Peter McGrane, attached to St. Patrick's Church, situated on South Twentieth street, near Walnut, Philadelphia.

blind drew near to our dear Lord in His holy Tabernacle.

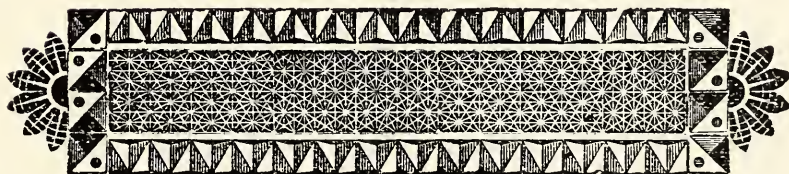
“Our good Dr. Hayes, who was all kindness to us, soon had built four more rooms, one of them expressly for a chapel, which he supplied with seats, and told me to order the carpenter to do anything we wished to make it convenient. This was called ‘the Sisters’ chapel,’ for the Protestant chaplain had his preaching in the corridor, or wherever he could collect an audience. Liberty was granted the soldiers to come to the chapel whenever we had service; and many of the pious ones passed much of their time in making the Stations, a set of which some of their comrades bought at their own expense, and placed there.

“Our new refectory was so arranged that, between it and the chapel, we had temporary doors, which, when opened, made our chapel over one hundred feet long. These two rooms were crowded every Sunday and every festival; and it frequently happened that many of our invalids, in order to secure a seat, came before our meditation was finished, before 5 a. m.

“Protestants were also attracted by the short but beautiful exhortations of Father McGrane, who said Mass for us three times in each week.

“At first, we were obliged to borrow what was necessary for Divine Service, but after re-

ceiving their pay, our soldiers made a collection among themselves, and requested the Sister Superior to purchase, with the amount, ornaments for the chapel; and they did the same, at different times, until they had a good supply of everything. They even wished new settees and a sanctuary carpet, saying, 'When the Hospital is closed, the Sisters can take everything that we bought for the orphans.' "



XII.

THE JUBILEE OF 1864 AT SATTERLEE.—SMALL-POX CASES.

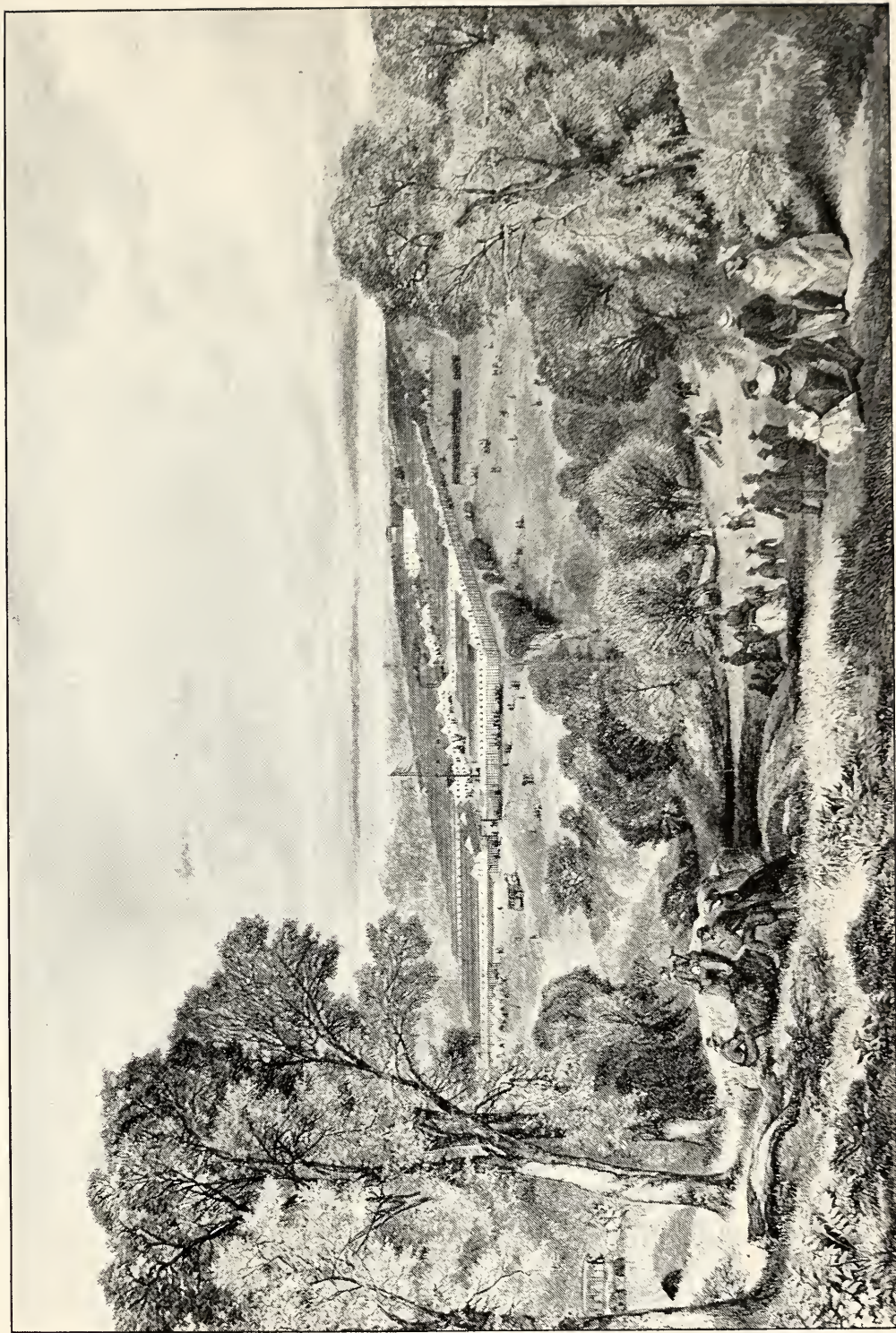


IN April, 1863, Right Rev. Bishop Wood did us the honor to administer Confirmation in our little chapel to thirty-one of our poor soldiers, most of whom were converts, and two of them upwards of forty years of age.

“ In February of 1864, forty-four received this Sacrament, and one, being unable to leave his bed, the Bishop had the kindness to go to the ward, in his robes, to confirm him. All behaved with the utmost respect during this ceremony.

“ When Mass was finished, Bishop Wood distributed prayer-books, rosaries, and medals, which he had previously blessed, and then told the Catholics to approach the railing. To his astonishment, as well as satisfaction, all in the chapel came forward. He addressed them with a short exhortation, and dismissed them.

“ The hour for Mass was six o'clock. Many of the patients were in the chapel an hour and a half before that time, in order to secure seats,



VIEW OF SATTERLEE HOSPITAL IN 1862. FORTIETH AND SPRUCE STREETS, WEST PHILADELPHIA.

although some of them, being crippled, had to be carried in the arms of their comrades.

“At three o'clock on Sundays and festivals, we had Vespers and Rosary. The patients felt it quite a privilege to be permitted to unite with us.

“In Lent, we had the Way of the Cross; and in May, we also had the devotions of the Month of Mary at seven o'clock in the evening. The chapel was always crowded at these times, and many took pleasure in bringing candles and flowers for the Altar. When the Month of Mary was over, they expressed great regret that they had no devotions in the evening when the Sisters had theirs.

“Our pious soldiers also took great delight in decorating the chapel for Christmas with green boughs, festoons, rosettes, etc. They stayed up the greater part of the preceding night in order to prepare them. Indeed, it always gave them great pleasure to help the Sisters in any kind of work, even preventing them, when they found them at any kind of laborious duties.

“In May of 1864, the Jubilee was celebrated at Satterlee Hospital. Our poor sufferers were most happy to have it in their power to obtain this great indulgence. Many received the Sacraments who had not approached them for ten,

fifteen, and some for twenty-five years. One had been forty years without going to Confession. He had lived on bad terms with his wife, but he sent for her that they might be reconciled before finishing the Jubilee.

“The soldiers wore with the greatest confidence the Scapular, Miraculous Medal and *Agnus Dei*, and many attributed their preservation from injury to one or the other of these. A pale young man came one evening to the door of Sister N——’s room for medicine, and, appearing to suffer as he placed his hand on his breast, Sister asked him if the wound was very painful. He answered no, but he knew it would have been mortal but for a pair of Scapulars his mother had placed on his neck before he left home. The bullet had passed through his uniform-coat, battered his watch to pieces, and lodged in his Scapular, leaving nothing more serious than a little soreness. He now wished to be instructed in regard to them, so that he might be invested with them by the chaplain before he returned to his regiment.

“Another—a Protestant—said that a friend of his had put the Scapulars on his neck the morning he left home, telling him that the Blessed Virgin would protect him, and bring him safe through all dangers, if he said a prayer to her every day. He had done so; and although his

comrades had fallen on all sides of him, and a shell tore up the ground quite near his feet, he remained unharmed and even fearless. He said to Sister N——: ‘I wish to be instructed and baptized.’ But, as he was ordered to his regiment, there was no time for it.

“We distributed a great number of medals and *Agnus Deis*; even Protestants asked for them before returning to the field, promising to wear them with respect, and to say their prayers every day, ‘because,’ they said, ‘the Catholic soldiers who wear them escape so many dangers.’

“Cases of smallpox had occurred in the hospital from time to time, but the patients were removed as soon as possible to the Smallpox Hospital, which was several miles from the city. The poor fellows were more distressed on account of their being sent away from the Sisters to be nursed, than they were on account of the disease. It was heart-rending when the ambulance came, to hear the poor fellows begging to be left, even if they had to be entirely alone, provided the Sisters would be near them to have the Sacraments administered in the hour of danger.

“We offered our services, several times, to attend these poor sick, but were told that the Government had sent them away to avoid con-

tagion. At last, however, the Surgeon-in-Charge obtained permission to keep the smallpox patients in the camp, some distance from the Hospital. The tents were made very comfortable, with good large stoves to heat them, and 'flys' (double covers) over the tops.

"The next thing was to have the Sisters in readiness, in case their services were required. Every one was generous enough to offer herself for the duty, but it was thought more prudent to accept one who had had the disease. As soon as the soldiers learned that a Sister had been assigned to the camp, they said, 'Well, if I get the smallpox now, I don't care, because one of our Sisters will take care of me.'

"From November, 1864, until May, 1865, we had upward of ninety cases—of whom nine or ten died. Two had the black smallpox. They were baptized before they died. We had, I may say, entire charge of the poor sufferers, as the physician who attended them seldom paid them a visit, but allowed us to do anything we thought proper for them.

"The patients were very little marked, and much benefited by drinking freely of tea made from *Saracenia Purpurea*, or pitcher plant. When the weather permitted, I visited those poor fellows almost every day. Like little children, at these times, they expected some

little treat of oranges, cakes, jellies, apples and such things, which we always had for them.

"They often said it was the Sisters who cured them and not the doctors, for they believed the latter were afraid of the disease.

"Our smallpox patients appeared to think that the Sisters were not like other human beings, or they would not attend such loathsome contagious diseases, which every one else shunned.

"One day, I was advising an application to a man's face for poison—he would not see one of the doctors, because, he said, the doctor did him no good—and I told him this remedy had cured a Sister who was poisoned.

"The man looked at me in perfect astonishment. 'A Sister!' he exclaimed. I answered 'Yes.' 'Why!' said he, 'I didn't know the Sisters ever got anything like that.' I told him, 'To be sure they do. They are liable to take disease as well as any one else.' 'To be sure *not!*' he said, 'for the boys often say they must be different from other people, for they do for us what no other person would do. They are not afraid of fevers, smallpox, or anything else.'

"The physicians acknowledged that they would have lost many more patients, had it not been for the Sisters' watchful care and knowledge of medicine.

XIII.

THE SOLDIERS' RESPECT AND ESTEEM FOR THE SISTERS.

“HE officers as well as the soldiers showed the greatest respect for the Sisters. The Surgeon-in-Charge, Dr. I. J. Hayes, often remarked with pleasure that the Sisters had such influence over the soldiers. No matter how rudely they might behave, as soon as the Sister of that ward, or any other, made her appearance, they became quiet and orderly. They have often refused to go on night-watch, or detailed duty, for the doctor, but never once when the Sister asked it of them.

“The Surgeon-in-Charge gave orders upon our first arrival at the Hospital that any want of obedience or respect should be severely punished, but, happily, there was not a single instance of either.

“One incident will show the good feeling of all toward the Sisters. One of the patients of Ward —— had been in town on a pass, and had indulged too freely in liquor; but on his return, he went quietly to bed. Sister—not knowing his condition—took him his medicine,

touched the bedclothes to rouse him, and the poor man, being stupid and sleepy, thought his comrades were teasing him. He gave a blow that sent Sister and the medicine across the room. Some of the convalescents seized him by the collar, and would have choked him, if Sister had not interfered. He was reported, and sent under an escort to the guard-house, where the stocks were being prepared for him. Nothing could be done for his release, as the Surgeon-in-Charge was absent.

"As soon as he returned, the Sisters begged that the poor man might return to his ward, and be relieved from all punishment, as well as from the guard-house. The Surgeon said he could refuse nothing to the Sisters. Their request was granted, but in order to make a strong impression on the soldiers, he dispatched an order to each ward, to be read at roll-call, to the effect that this man was released only at the earnest entreaty of the Sister Superior and the Sister of the ward. Otherwise, he would have been severely dealt with. When the poor man came to himself, and learned what he had done, he begged a thousand pardons of Sister, and promised never to touch liquor again.

"On Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving Day, etc., at our request, all the prisoners in the guard-house were liberated. The officers often

came to us to solicit favors from Dr. Hayes for them, as they knew 'he would not refuse the Sisters anything they asked of him.'

"As to the visitors at the Hospital, in the beginning, some of them were very much prejudiced; and, one day, they asked Dr. Hayes why he had the Sisters of Charity to nurse in his Hospital, when there were 'ever so many ladies' who would be happy to do that service? He answered, because he considered the Sisters of Charity the only women in the world capable of nursing the sick properly.

"Another time, a committee of ladies from an association waited upon him with letters of recommendation, accompanied by a large donation of clothing, fruits, preserves, etc., and offering their services as an organized body to attend to the affairs of the Hospital, and take turns in nursing the sick.

"The Doctor thanked them, saying he already had an excellent, organized body working under his own eyes so satisfactorily, that he was unwilling to change it for another. This body was the Sisters of Charity, who had his entire confidence. But, if the ladies wished to do some good, they might take the place of some outsiders, who were, at times, disposed to be rather troublesome. He then directed the orderly to take what they had brought to the Sisters in

the Donation Room. The ladies left, rather embarrassed by their cool reception.

“From our taking charge of the Hospital, June the ninth, 1862, until we left it on August third, 1865, ninety-one Sisters had been on duty there. The war being over in April, 1865, the Government only desired our services, after that, until the convalescents could obtain their discharge. The physicians, however, requested us to remain until all the sick were removed to the Soldiers’ Home, or returned to their own homes.

“I am happy to be able to state that, during our whole sojourn at Satterlee Hospital, there never was an unpleasant word between the physicians or officers and the Sisters. The eve of our departure, the Executive Officer said to me: ‘Sister, allow me to ask you a question. Has there ever been any misunderstanding or dissatisfaction between the officers and the Sisters since you came to this Hospital?’ I answered, ‘None at all.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I will tell you why I asked. The other evening we were at a party. The conversation turned on the Sisters in the Hospitals, and I said there had never been a falling-out between us at Satterlee—that we were all on the same good terms as on the first day we met. Some of the City Hospital doctors said they did not believe that forty

women could live together without disputing; much less, that they could be among such a number of men without it.'

"The number of Baptisms we have on record is fifty-seven. The number of communicants could not be ascertained, as some approached the Holy Table every Sunday.

"After the battle of Gettysburg, we received a large number of patients who were very badly wounded—in all, we had about 6,000. The wards were densely crowded, and there were three hundred tents erected on the grounds. Additional physicians and nurses were on duty, but a considerable number died from their wounds. Many converts were among them, who died in the most edifying dispositions. This was in 1863.

"The greatest number of Sisters in the Hospital, when we had so many sick, was forty-three.

XIV.

ADDITIONAL EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARIES OF THE SISTERS.

“AY, 1864.—The beautiful Month of Mary has again opened with all its sweet attractions, and we have commenced the customary devotions every evening, at seven o'clock. New patients are coming in every day, and the Hospital is fast filling up. The wards are reopened on the south corridor: tents are going up outside the enclosure, to be occupied by invalids of such cases as might prove dangerous to keep in the wards, such as smallpox, etc.

“Several have already approached the Sacraments; and the newly-arrived eagerly crowd our chapel, particularly in the evening; among them, are many Protestants. I think we never before had so large a congregation, or one so eager to secure seats in the chapel, for they come an hour before the services commence.

“As usual, after the refilling of the Hospital, several are in a dying condition from the effects of their wounds. Many, also, have died.

“The Catholics received the Sacraments with

the exception of one, who could only receive Extreme Unction and the last benediction, on account of being delirious. He was wounded in the head and suffered very much. The way in which Sister discovered him to be a Catholic was certainly providential. While examining some article of his clothing, she found sewed up, as a little cushion, a Gospel of St. John and a written Catholic prayer.

"She immediately sent for the priest, and the patient seemed to recover his reason for a few moments. He smiled a welcome to the priest, but could not speak. He died about six o'clock, the same evening. He had been in the Hospital only one week. A few evenings previous to his death, after Sister had left the ward, he arose several times, and made his way to the door of her medicine room on which he beat violently, nor could he be prevailed upon to leave until the men took him by main force and put him to bed.

"We thought, afterwards, that he was then trying to request her to send for the priest, during a partial return to reason. Be this as it may, she is very thankful that she procured him the benefit of Extreme Unction, and she desires all those who read this little story to pray for the repose of his soul.

"May 23.—We have now nearly three thou-

sand four hundred patients in our Hospital. Indeed, it is as if we were in the midst of a little city. Everywhere we turn, we meet crowds of the maimed, the lame, and the blind, going through the corridors and yards, as best they can.

“The wards are quickly filling up with rows of beds in the centre, as new arrivals are coming in, every day, from the recent battles. Many more are dying, this summer, than last summer. The cause is supposed to be that the poor soldiers are worn out with privations before being wounded or falling ill. We had only one baptism this month, but we must be satisfied. The poor sufferer was a patient in Ward F. His name was Benjamin Haines.

“June.—The Hospital is now quite filled with sick. Many are removed to the tents, on account of their wounds becoming gangrenous. Many, also, are dying from the same cause.

“The 26th of this month, we had another grand time in our little Chapel. Again, our good Bishop administered Confirmation to our late converts, and many other Catholics who had neglected it in their youth. This time, there were forty-three confirmed, and a large number approached the Holy Table. How edifying it was to see those poor cripples, painful as were their wounds, rising at an early hour to come to the Chapel! Our good Bishop made

some appropriate remarks on the occasion, encouraging all to the practice of holy prayer in all our words and actions.

“July.—This month, we had quite a number of baptisms. In Ward W, a young man named Henry Kimble, suffering from malignant typhus fever, was discovered by Sister to be unbaptized. She explained to him the necessity for it, and told him also, the little hope there was of his recovery. He requested to be baptized as soon as possible.

“Sister gave him private baptism, thinking he was about to die, but he recovered so as to be able to sit up and read. Sister gave him books that explained our holy religion. He endeavored to prepare for his First Holy Communion, intending to make it with a number of the others; but a severe hemorrhage of the lungs, the day previous, prevented his coming to the Chapel; however, Father brought him Holy Communion to the ward. He is improving, but very weak.

“In Ward R, there was a patient named John Smith. He was a month in the ward, and suffered very much. Morally speaking, he was a good man, and very patient and respectful. He had never been baptized, and did not know that it was necessary to salvation. As Sister saw that he was ignorant on that point, she explained it to him. He dreaded death, and could not think it was so near. He was conscious until the last.

During the last three days of his life, he seemed to be in deep thought. Sister said but little of death to him; she saw it was in vain.

“An hour before his death, she was passing near his bed, when he called to her, and said in a tone of despair: ‘Oh, Sister, I am going to die!’ Sister asked him if he was sorry for not having been baptized. He answered: ‘Oh, yes!’ Sister told him it was not yet too late. He appeared overjoyed at hearing this, and she asked who he wished should baptize him? He answered, ‘A Catholic priest.’

“Sister replied: ‘There is no Catholic priest here, and there is no time to send for one, but in a case like yours, the Catholic Church permits any one to administer Baptism.’ He said at once: ‘Sister, baptize me. I want to be a child of God.’ He repeated some prayers after Sister in a very fervent manner. She asked him: ‘If you recover, do you intend to be a faithful Catholic?’ He replied: ‘Oh, yes.’ He recited the *Hail Mary* with her, and in five minutes after he was baptized, he died in great peace.

“In the same ward, another patient, an Indian named James Graham, who had been brought up where God was not known, was altogether ignorant of Him and of His goodness. Sister told him of his danger, and of the little hope

there was of his recovery, and of the necessity there was of preparing for a happy death.

“As well as he knew how, the poor man tried most fervently to prepare himself. He appeared never to have had any care or attention bestowed upon him, and the little we showed him won him so much that he thought nothing was right except what Sister did. He asked to be baptized in the Church that Sister thought was the right one, and in no other. She gave him some instructions, and left him a few days to consider them.

“He wore a medal of the Blessed Virgin, and would kiss it, and say: ‘My sweet Mother, I will soon see you in heaven!’ A Protestant minister came to see him, and Sister asked him if this was the one he would choose to have baptize him. He asked, ‘Is this the one you would bring?’ She told him ‘No,’ and he said: ‘Well, bring the right one.’ The priest had not yet arrived, and he was sinking rapidly, so Sister baptized him as he earnestly desired, praying at the same time that God would have mercy on his soul. He died about two hours after, in peace.

“In the same ward, a patient, named William Wilson, lay suffering from a serious wound. He was very much prejudiced, and spoke disdainfully to Sister, appearing to dislike her to

come near him. However, she made no distinction between him and any other; and he soon changed his manner, and became docile and grateful. His great suffering caused him to utter the most pitiful cries to Sister to give him something to relieve him. This awakened the sympathies of all who approached him. Finally, his leg had to be amputated above the knee.

“He had now the greatest confidence in Sister, and even asked her to explain the meaning of her beads, which she did; and took occasion to remind him of the state of his soul. She found that he was not baptized, and did not know a prayer, and she gave him some short instructions; also, a book which he read, notwithstanding his great suffering. He exclaimed: ‘Oh, Sister, I have been such a wild, bad boy!’ He became very anxious to be baptized, and Sister told him to consider well what he was about to do.

“On questioning him, the priest found that his dispositions were very good, and he baptized and anointed him. He made the most fervent aspirations, and would press his crucifix to his breast, and say: ‘My Jesus, take me!’ He wore a medal of the Blessed Virgin, which he valued very much; and, after lingering a few days, he died happily.

XV.

MISSION WORK AMONG THE NEGRO AND INDIAN SOLDIERS.

“OWARD the latter part of July, the colored patients arrived, beginning to come in at an early hour of one evening, and continuing to arrive during the greater part of that night. They were placed in the lower wards, until arrangements could be made for them in the tents, of which there were five camps, consisting of ten tents each. Camps 2 and 3, with part of Camp 4, were occupied by them.

“In Camp 2, a patient—a Catholic—was very low. Sister asked him how long since he had been to Confession. He said he had not been since Easter, and he expressed a desire to see a priest. Sister sent immediately for Father McGrane, who anointed him, as he was then unconscious, and could make no confession. He died about 8 o'clock, the same evening.

“In the same camp, another patient was dying, and at his request, Sister gave him private Baptism. He died a few hours after. In Camp 4, there were three colored men baptized, who

died soon after. Their names were James Simons, William Hopkins, and Joseph White.

"August.—Among the soldiers, who were of many nations, there was a large number of Indians. In Ward 20, there was a young Indian, named James Wise, who was far gone in consumption. The doctors thought he could not live very many days. Sister sent for Charles Corbin, another Indian, who was in Ward U, to speak to him of his condition. Charley was a well-instructed Catholic, and understood the French language, through which he communicated to Sister the dispositions of the poor sufferer, who did not know that he had a soul, or that there was a God. In fact, to use Charley's own words, 'he was a perfect savage.'

"He would not listen to anything that Charley had to say, either in regard to the existence of a God or the immortality of the soul. On leaving for the night, Charley told Sister what little hope there was for his conversion.

"But how mysterious are the ways of God! On his return the next morning, he found him with very different dispositions. The poor sick one had had a dream which he related as follows: He thought he saw our Lord, coming towards him with a priest ready to baptize him, thinking he was an infant, and Heaven was open to receive him. This, he described to Charley as

minutely as if he had seen the priest in reality; at the same time, requesting him to bring him to the Chapel to be baptized.

“The next time Father McGrane came to say Mass, Charley brought his ‘poor little savage,’ as he still called him, although he was almost too weak to walk to the Chapel. Here, there followed a scene which I must describe. Three interpretations were needed in order to perform the ceremonies of administering the Sacrament of Baptism: first, Charley, who understood the Indian language, interpreted it to Sister in French; then, Sister translated the French into English for Father McGrane, who thus learned the desire of the ‘little savage,’ the third in the circle.

“He lingered for two weeks after his baptism, and, dying, was interred in Cathedral Cemetery. Since his death, Charley has often expressed the wish to be, one day, as happy as he believes him to be. May he rest in peace!

“At the same time, there was baptized with him another patient, named Louis Smythe, of Ward T. Previous to the reception of Baptism, he told Sister that he was in doubt about his religion. She gave him books of instruction to read, after which he went to Father McGrane, and told him that he wished to become a Catholic; and after a course of instruc-

tion, he was received into the Church. His gratitude to God for bringing him into the only True Church was very great. Early in the Fall, he rejoined his regiment, and soon after was promoted.

“As there is now a large number of sick to be taken care of, I might say our labors are doubled; but, there is so much good to be done, we are encouraged to labor with renewed ardor. God in His goodness seconds our poor efforts to draw souls to Him by inspiring those to whom He has already given the Light of Faith to communicate this knowledge to their companions. The Sister in charge of Camp 5 relates some remarkable conversions and reformations during this month.

“The first was that of a man named M. Burke, aged about fifty-three, who had not been to his religious duties for thirty years. He was very badly wounded in the left leg. The wound gradually grew worse, and the surgeons who attended him deemed it necessary to amputate the limb, although they thought he would die in either case.

“They told him, however, that there was more hope of recovery if the leg was amputated, and he consented to the operation. Before it was performed, Sister spoke to him of returning to God, of the long time that had passed

during which he had scarcely so much as thought of Him, and reminded him that he had now been brought where he had the opportunity of receiving the Sacraments, while so many of his comrades were instantly killed on the battlefield.

“He was so affected by these remarks as to shed tears, and said: ‘Yes, Sister, how true it all is! How wicked I have been! But I do wish to go to Confession.’ On the morning on which he was to see the priest, although he had spent a restless night, he made every exertion to prepare for Confession, and seemed to be fully impressed with the importance of the action he was about to perform.

“He made his confession, and received absolution in preparation for death, in case the operation might not be successful. This was on Wednesday, and the operation was to take place on the following Friday.

“When it was over, he was very weak, but perfectly calm. The following day, he was still weaker. About four o’clock in the afternoon, Sister was giving him a drink, and as she turned to leave him, he exclaimed: ‘Oh, Sister, I wish to speak to you!’ His dear brother was standing at the bedside. Sister asked him what he wished to say. He clasped her hand, and raising his eyes toward heaven said, ‘Sister, I for-

give everybody. Oh, that I could go to God ! But I desire only the will of God.' Sister made aspirations which he endeavored to repeat with all the fervor of a soul truly converted to God.

"He died about six o'clock of that evening. Sister, and another Sister who read the prayers for the departing, were with him. May he rest in peace ! Sister requests those who read this to pray for his eternal repose.

"The second case—in the same camp—was a young man, twenty-two years of age, who had been wounded in the left arm previous to coming here; he had typhoid fever here, from which he seemed to suffer more than from the wound, although that was always very painful.

"He was naturally very timid, and of an irritable temper, but Sister did not consider this a fault in him on account of his youth and the state of health from which it proceeded. She was attending him for some time before she knew that he was not a Catholic ; his actions, conversation, and simplicity, led her to think he was one.

"Perceiving him growing worse every day, and the surgeons in charge of the case telling her of his danger, she spoke to him about preparing for death. What a subject upon which to speak to one so young and full of life ! It was indeed the least of his thoughts, for never

was any one more desirous of life. He could think of nothing else.

“Sister assured him of his danger, and then he told her that he had never been baptized; that his father was a Catholic and his mother a Protestant; consequently, she would not have the children baptized, nor permit them to go to church, except with her. He had frequently visited the Catholic church, however, and had been so impressed with what he had seen and heard there that he believed it to be the One True Church.

“With these dispositions, Sister prepared him to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, which he received with great fervor. After that, he had all the simplicity of a child, and received all that Sister said with a child’s faith and joy.

“He looked to her as to his mother, and said his morning and night prayers to her, as little children do, with great fervor. His sufferings were very great, and it became too cold for him in camp, he having frequent chills. He was therefore removed to a ward, where he died on the 14th of September, after having the happiness of receiving the Holy Communion again before his death. He was buried in Cathedral Cemetery. May his soul rest in peace!

XVI.

SOME REMARKABLE CONVERSIONS.

“ HERE was in the same camp, a colored man who was injured by the explosion at City Point. His leg was amputated immediately, but owing to the want of proper care, it had to be amputated the second time. Being—to all appearances—of a robust constitution, there were great hopes of his recovery. But God had willed otherwise.

“Sister spoke to him concerning his soul, little thinking that he was to die so soon. He told her that he had never been baptized, that he believed it to be necessary to salvation, that he had often tried to be baptized but could not, and that he would not like to die without it.

“This was on Sunday evening. On Monday morning, about eight o'clock, Sister was sent for; he was dying. She gave him private baptism, and he died a few minutes after.

“September.—New arrivals are expected; consequently, all the colored patients have been transferred to the Summit House, (this house occupied the site upon which the St. Vincent's Home and Maternity Hospital now stands. It was a fashionable summer boarding-house previ-

ous to the war,) in order to make room for the new arrivals. With a few exceptions, these last were not very sick, but worn out with the fatigue of their journey.

“During this month, there were three baptisms—one in Ward Q, and two in Ward U. One of the two last told Sister that he wished to be baptized, and become a Catholic. As he was sinking fast, Sister gave him private Baptism, a few hours before he died.

“The other was a patient, named H. Jones, who came to the Hospital early in the Spring, suffering from consumption. After a few months, he caught the varioloid, and was removed to a tent outside the Hospital limits. He soon recovered sufficiently to go about, but was again prostrated with a severe attack of smallpox.

“However, it pleased God to restore him a second time, and he again returned to the ward. After two weeks, his cough became very violent, and from the weakness caused by his recent illness, he sank rapidly. As he was not baptized, Sister asked him if he was satisfied to die without it. He said, ‘No,’ for he believed it to be necessary to salvation. Sister explained to him the mysteries of religion, and excited him to contrition for his sins by the recitation of the Acts. She baptized him, a few minutes before he died.

"October 4th.—Father McGrane baptized a patient from Ward E, named Alexander Campbell. He is still in the Hospital at this writing, a practical Catholic.

"October 11th.—This morning, Father baptized two patients, one from Camp 3, named George Reely; the other from Ward I, named Nathan Paul Bud. The former was a married man about forty years of age. He was transferred to this Hospital after the colored patients had left.

"When about a week in the camp, he inquired of Sister if a Catholic priest visited it, and asked when he could see him. Sister told him the priest would be here the next day. He then said: 'Sister, I am not a Catholic, but my wife and children are Catholics. I have been married over fifteen years, and during that time, my wife has never asked me to become a Catholic in words, but her good example has been more powerful than any words, and I have more than once experienced the effects of her prayers. When I left home, I made the resolution not to return until I had become a Catholic, and this is the first time I have had an opportunity of doing so.'

"Sister gave him some books of instruction, and took him to Father McGrane on the following day. The Father questioned him, and

found his dispositions so good that he baptized him immediately.

“On the next Sunday, he made his First Communion, after which he remarked to Sister: ‘What an eventful week this has been for me! Oh, how thankful would my wife be, and my children, too, if they knew of what has taken place! But I do not intend to let them know until I go home to share in their happiness.’

“Shortly after, he had a furlough of twenty days, at the expiration of which he returned to the Hospital, and remained here until he obtained his discharge. He told Sister that his reception at home can be better imagined than described.

“The second patient from Camp 3, whom Father McGrane baptized, was a young man about twenty-two years old. He was brought to the Hospital in May, ill with the consumption. Sister, seeing his case was hopeless, spoke to him concerning his soul’s welfare. He told her he had never been baptized, and did not belong to any form of worship. She asked him what he thought of Baptism and the One True Church. He believed that Baptism was necessary for salvation, but did not know which was the One True Church.

“Sister told him of the belief that the Catholic Church was the only One. She gave him a catechism, and told him to read it at his leisure,

and judge for himself. He was very much pleased with it, and earnestly desired to be baptized.

“He went to see Father McGrane several times, who found his dispositions very good, and baptized him. On the following Sunday, he made his First Holy Communion. As he knew he had not long to live, he thought he was not worthy to be baptized, and felt he could not thank Our Lord enough for having called him to the True Faith.

“On the day he was baptized, as he was sitting by his bed, a Protestant minister came into the ward with some tracts. The patient thought he was selling books; accordingly, he asked him if he would bring him a Catholic Bible, a Catholic prayer-book, and a *Catholic Christian Instructed*. This was not much in accord with the minister’s way of thinking; nevertheless, he performed this generous act of charity, and bought the books for him.

“He wrote to his mother and sister, telling them of his great joy in finding the One True Church, and of his baptism. They in their turn congratulated him on his ‘finding the Saviour,’ as they termed it.

“While he remained in the Hospital his disease grew worse and often prevented him from attending Mass, one of his greatest priva-

tions. His behavior at the Holy Mass was most edifying, and he was very zealous that others bearing the name of Catholic should practise their religion.

“There was one man who, although baptized a Catholic, had been for years negligent of his religious duties. With this man, our zealous convert used all his endeavors to bring him back to the Faith, which he had so recently embraced. But it was with him as with many others who abuse the grace of God. It is often taken from the unworthy Catholics, and bestowed upon the poor converts who have corresponded to the light of Faith, and who thus win the crown destined for another.

“Some time after, he got his discharge and went home; but he did not live long to enjoy its comforts.” In the following March, Sister received a letter from his mother, announcing his death on the nineteenth ultimo. He had had the consolations of his religion before he died. Although his people were not Catholics, they complied with his wishes, and sent for a priest. May he rest in peace!”

XVII.

A SINGULAR CONVERSION UNDER GREAT DIFFICULTIES.

“CTOBER the 23d.—This morning, Father McGrane baptized a young man named William Black, of Camp 3. He also made his First Communion, with five others who had been preparing for this Sacrament for some weeks. He had come to Sister, some time before, and told her that he wished to become a Catholic. She asked him his reason for embracing our holy religion. He said: ‘ Well, Sister, if there is any church in the right way, I think it is the Catholic Church, because it is the most persecuted. I always preferred to go to that church rather than to any other.’

“Sister told him he must expect to meet with trials and persecutions and ridicule from others for becoming a Catholic; but if he did it with the intention of pleasing God, for the salvation of his soul, and with a firm determination of adhering to it until death, his reward would be very great hereafter.

“After he had read certain books of instruction, Sister took him to see Father McGrane, and

he also attended the instructions given to those who were preparing for their First Communion.

"It was truly an edifying sight when those six young men made their First Communion. Each held a lighted candle during the Mass. We had Benediction, and Father McGrane addressed some words of encouragement to the new communicants, reminding them that they were surrounded in the Hospital by so many temptations, and the bad example of their more depraved companions. They should ever be grateful to God for this special favor, and should remember this as one of the happiest days of their lives—the great day of their First Communion. That the famous Emperor Napoleon expressed the same to one of his generals, who remarked to him, after they had gained a great victory, that it was the happiest day of his life, but Napoleon replied that there was a still happier day, and that was the one on which he had made his First Communion.

"Some of these young men remain here, where they have duties, and the others were sent to rejoin their regiments.

"October 26th.—The Sister whose turn it was to sit up with the sick, relates the following remarkable conversion of a patient in Ward 5, named Joseph Carpenter, who was suffering from fever.

"His wife was sitting beside his bed, and she had permission to remain all night. When she saw Sister, she advanced to meet her, but on approaching her, apologized, saying that she thought it was the Sister of the ward. Sister then asked her who belonging to her was sick in the ward. She answered: 'My husband, who I don't think will live through the night.' She then asked Sister if she could not go and see him. Sister said that was the object of her visit.

"She stopped to sympathize with the poor lady for awhile, and then invited her to go into the medicine room attached to the ward, in which there was a bed prepared for her, where she might take a little rest, promising, at the same time, that she would see that her husband was cared for.

"Sister inquired if her husband was aware that he was so low, and if he had made any preparation for death. She said: "Oh, Sister, I have not had the courage to speak to my husband of death, or to prepare him to meet the Saviour!'

"Sister inquired if he had been baptized. She said: No; that all his family were Methodists, but as for him, he had never been baptized. Sister, of course, made every allowance for her feelings in not being able to speak to him of his approaching death, and said to her: 'Would you

have any objections if I would speak to him on the subject?' She replied: 'Oh, dear Sister, I should be most grateful to you, for I know that he is not prepared to meet his Saviour.'

"Sister then left her to go to the patient, whom she found very weak. After giving him some little nourishment which the Sister of the ward had left prepared, she told him that she was sorry to find him so low, and asked him how long he had been ill. On his telling her that he had been ill for a considerable time, she spoke to him of the goodness of God in giving him so long a time to prepare for eternity, and supposed that he had profited by it.

"He raised his drooping head and, looking earnestly at her, said: 'This time has passed as the rest of my life.' He seemed very intelligent, and had received a good education. He asked Sister, 'Do you think that I shall not get well?' She replied: 'I do not wish to disquiet you, neither do I wish to deceive you by giving you false hopes of recovery. I think your case is a very critical one at present.' He then cried: 'Oh, Sister, if I could only see a Catholic priest! But it is too late—too late!'

"Sister, not having suggested it in any way, was very much surprised, and said: 'Why, I did not know that you were a Catholic!' He replied that he was not a Catholic, but that he believed

the Catholic Church was the true Church, and in it, he desired to be baptized.

“But he repeated again: ‘It is too late—too late!’ Sister then said that she would send for a priest, immediately. ‘May God bless you, Sister!’ he cried ‘It was the Lord who sent you to me this night. But what will my wife say? She will never consent to my becoming a Catholic.’

“Sister told him it was his wife who had asked her to speak to him, therefore she did not think she would have any objections to his following the dictates of his conscience. He asked Sister if she would mention it to her, which she readily consented to do, thinking she would be delighted to see her husband in such a beautiful disposition; and going to the room where the lady was, Sister told her of all that had taken place.

“She exclaimed: ‘A *Catholic!* Never will I permit him to die a Catholic, and disgrace my family!’ She could not believe that he ever thought of such a thing, but that Sister had certainly misunderstood him.

“Saying this, she left the room, and hastened to his bedside, where she said to him: ‘My dear, what do you mean? Did you say that you wished to see a Catholic priest?’ He answered: ‘Ah, yes, Mary! I do wish a Catholic priest to baptize me. The Catholic Church, Mary, is the

only one; and in it, I wish to die.' Here, she interrupted him with 'You are perfectly crazy, James! You are full of brandy.' He declared that he had not tasted brandy, the doctor having discontinued its use the day before, as it did not agree with him.

"He continued: 'Mary, for God's sake, allow me to follow my convictions, for should I die as I am, I shall never be saved.' She replied: 'I will never consent to your being baptized in the Catholic Church. What! Do you want to disgrace me?' He entreated her: 'Ah, Mary, have I ever refused you anything? Or have you ever had a wish that I have not endeavored to gratify? Then, don't, for God's sake, don't oppose what I think necessary for my salvation!'

"She said: 'Do you know what you are talking about? Don't you know it is too late for you to think of Baptism?'

"The poor man turned to Sister, and asked her: 'Do you think that I am too late?' Sister assured him of the mercy of God, and said that it is never too late to repent—that God is ready to receive us even at the eleventh hour, provided we come to Him with a contrite and humble heart.

"The poor man joined his hands, and made aloud an Act of Contrition for his past life. The wife, hearing it, reminded him that the Scripture

says 'Do penance, and be baptized. Now, what penance are you able to do? Nothing! Nothing!' answering herself in one breath. 'You must die as you are.'

"At this, Sister, seeing the poor man was too weak to stand any more, said to him: 'You are willing to offer your life in expiation of your past sins?' He raised his eyes and hands toward heaven, and said: 'Yes, my God! I offer You my body and soul. Do with me as You please. Ah, my God, how could I have spent my life in forgetfulness of You? Never again, will I forsake You for creatures. If I get well, the rest of my days shall be spent in Your service. But should it please You to accept the desire which I now feel of serving You on earth, then take me, if You please. Here I am, ready to suffer or to die, as pleases You.'

"Hearing all this, his wife said: 'You are perfectly foolish!' He looked pitifully at her, and said: 'Ah, Mary, it is foolish indeed to live for the world. Soon my poor soul will be summoned before its Maker. Then, let me beg you once more to grant my dying and only request.' She replied: 'My dear, don't ask me that again, for I never will grant it.'

"Here, Sister said that the poor man had already talked too much, and that they must leave him,

so that he might take a little repose, telling his wife that she, too, was very tired and needed rest. She then gave the nurse instructions to wait on him, in case she did not get back again that night, as she had several persons to visit.

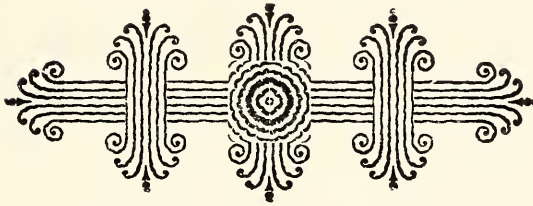
“This was joyful news for the wife; but the poor man seemed to be in perfect agony when he heard it. On this, the accompanying Sister went to talk to the lady to take up her attention, while Sister N—— told the patient that she would be back in about half an hour.

“We then left the ward, and our going dispersed the good lady’s fears. She went off to enjoy a good sound sleep, having directed the nurse to knock at the door in case her husband was dying.

“Sister returned to the ward in about half an hour, as she had promised, but it was too late to send to the city for a priest; so, after giving him the necessary instructions, she told him that it was not necessary to have the consent of his wife to be baptized. He then said: ‘Sister, baptize me, for the Lord’s sake; for I feel that I cannot live until morning!’

“Seeing him in a dying condition, she baptized him conditionally, at three o’clock in the morning. Sister says that, in her life, she never heard such beautiful aspirations, and never saw

any one more fervent. On the following morning, he told the Sister of the ward of his great happiness in being a child of God. He died, that same evening, in the most edifying manner. May he rest in peace !



XVIII.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS OF 1864 AT SAT- TERLEE.

“CTOBER 30.—A young man named Jeremiah Vandusen, a patient of Ward E, expressed a desire to become a Catholic. Sister questioned him, found his dispositions very good, and baptized him. He died two hours after.

“November.—All the patients who are able to travel are getting furloughs, some of ten, and some of thirty days, for the purpose of going home to vote. Very few remain, and the North Corridor is closed for the present. The camps are vacated.

“December.—Many of the patients have returned. The wards are reopened, and filled with the patients who were in the camps.

“December 20.—This morning, our chaplain baptized and anointed a patient in Ward E, named Henry Gilbert. He was very ill, and there was no hope of his recovery. His wife came to remain with him until the end. He had never been baptized, and refused to make any preparations for death.

“ His wife was heart-broken at this, and prayed earnestly for his conversion, but did not ask him to become a Catholic. Sister spoke to him about the Sacrament of Baptism, and of its necessity, and that, without it, he could not enter heaven when he died. He consented to be baptized, but not by a Catholic priest. He wished a minister of the Presbyterian church to perform the ceremony, which was accordingly done.

“ His poor wife was inconsolable, but our Lord heard her earnest prayers ; for, the next day, the patient was more uneasy than ever, and said he was not satisfied with this baptism, asking Sister if the priest would come to him. Sister replied : ‘ What do you want a priest for, since it was your own choice to have the minister ? ’ He answered : ‘ Oh, Sister, I want to see the priest. I wish to die a Catholic. Will you please send for him, and do you think he will come ? ’

“ Sister said that the priest would be there in the morning, and that he could see him then. He waited anxiously, inquiring if he had yet come. After Mass, Father McGrane came to the ward, and examined him closely regarding his desire to become a Catholic. Finding his motives sincere, he gave him conditional baptism, and anointed him.

“ Christmas, 1864.—This beautiful season has already gone, with its many sweet recollections.

We spent it most happily with our dear Sister Gonzaga and our poor soldiers. There have been many changes among our Sisters during the year; only five remain of those who were here at the commencement of the Hospital.

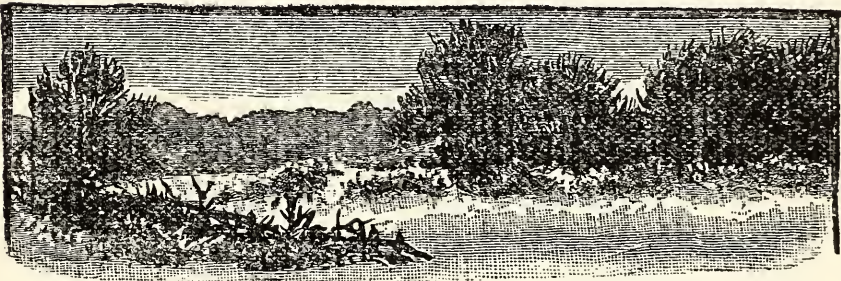
“ Our dear Sister Gonzaga is still in our midst, manifesting the same evenness of character in all circumstances, prosperous and adverse. The patients took a lively interest in the decoration of the wards, in preparation for this great festival. Our Chapel was beautifully decorated with evergreens; and our chaplain, Father McGrane, offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at five o'clock, and said the usual two Masses in succession.

“ We had Vespers and Benediction in the afternoon: also a sermon. Crowds of visitors thronged the Hospital, all day. The ladies furnished a grand dinner for the soldiers, and refreshments in the afternoon. They also provided a musical entertainment in the Reading Room. The soldiers expressed themselves much pleased and gratified. They proved it by the perfect order and sobriety which they observed throughout the day. They reminded us of little children,—they were so pleased and amused at everything.

“ On this beautiful Christmas morning, Father McGrane baptized a young man from Ward J,

named Enos Kitchen. He was a contract nurse here. Previous to his coming North, he was a soldier in the Confederate Army. He took the name of Joseph in baptism.

"He made his First Communion and was confirmed. He used to go to Communion every time the Sisters went. Father noticed him going so often, and told him kindly that he must come and see him, before he went to Communion. He remained in the Hospital, a practical Catholic.



XIX.

FIRST FRUITS OF THE NEW YEAR AT THE HOSPITAL.

“EW YEAR'S DAY, 1865.—Another year has rolled by and is almost forgotten, and before this year closes, we, too, may pass away and be forgotten. Should not this animate us to begin with renewed ardor to labor for our eternal destiny, when we all hope to meet in Heaven?

“January.—Toward the end of this month, there appeared many cases of smallpox in the wards, and it was thought prudent to remove them to the camp, to prevent contagion. Dr. Mullin was in charge, and Sister Josephine was appointed to take care of the poor sufferers.

“Notwithstanding their great precaution, it increased rapidly, sometimes to the number of forty-five at once. The first to die was a patient from Ward R, named Louis Rittenour. He came to the Hospital in May, 1864, wounded in the lungs, and suffered very much. The doctor had no hope for his recovery, and said so to Sister.

"Sister, finding that he was not baptized, told him the danger he was in, that he might die at any moment; and that, if he was not baptized, he could not enter Heaven. He felt that he would get well—which he did—and then be baptized.

"He told Sister that his mother was a Catholic, but that he had been brought up from babyhood by a relative, who had never had him baptized. Sister gave him a medal of the Blessed Virgin, which he wore. He recovered, and thought no more of baptism, until he took the smallpox so badly.

"As his wounds were not entirely healed, there was less hope of his getting over this attack. Sister asked him if he was satisfied to die without baptism. He replied that he did not want to die without it, but, actuated by human respect, he said: 'If I am baptized, the boys will laugh at me.' Sister said he must not mind what any one might say: he must remember that he had a soul to save. She said no more to him on that day.

"During the night, he grew worse, and called the attendant to go for Sister, as he thought he was dying, and wished her to baptize him. The nurse told him he could not see Sister that night, as it was too late, and circumstances rendered it impossible for her to go down.

"In the morning, he told Sister he wanted to be baptized in the Catholic Church, and she asked him if he intended to live up to what the Catholic Church required, should he recover. He said that he would. He was accordingly baptized; after which, he became very calm; and on the following morning, Father anointed him, and gave him the last benediction. He died on February 2, 1865.

"Lewis Bruce was baptized on January 25, 1865. His conversion was brought about through reading Catholic books. He said he had been taught to believe everything bad of Catholics.

"As soon as he learned the truth, his faith was so strong that he had no difficulty in believing anything the Church proposes. Before he knew the catechism, as well as after, he reduced to practice the doctrines of the Church with the docility of a child. He showed the sincerity of his conversion by overcoming a naturally stubborn and ungovernable disposition. Every one noticed the great change in him, previous to making his First Communion on March 19th, not quite one month after his baptism.

"The hand of God is plainly evident in one circumstance relative to that baptism. On Saturday morning, he told Sister that the

invalid corps to which he belonged was going away on Monday, and he had not been baptized, nor received sufficient instruction.

“Sister told him to see Father McGrane, and tell him the circumstances, which he did. But as Father had not met him before, he hesitated about baptizing him, and told him to return on the following Friday. The poor boy repeated this to Sister, and added that he would have to leave on the next morning.

“Sister went to the chapel, and kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, placed the poor boy in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as an assured place of refuge, earnestly beseeching our Lord not to let him go away until he had received baptism.

Sister received a speedy answer to her prayer. The company did not leave on Monday, but was delayed for some time. The young man not only was baptized, but made his First Communion, and a little later, his Easter Communion also.

“Another patient—of Ward H—was Andrew Hopkins, whose baptism we had the consolation to witness in our chapel. He had been a sufferer for two months. As soon as he was able to go about, he became Sister’s ‘extra diet boy’ (that means the one who brings the extra diet from the kitchen, and performs the other little

offices for the Sister. These 'boys' are generally well disposed, and of simple, docile natures, and there are many such in every ward).

"From day to day, Andrew would ask Sister questions regarding our holy religion, to which he generally received brief answers, as his own and Sister's time was so occupied. He generally concluded with something like this: 'I wish I was a Christian; but I think that God must never have intended me to become one, for I have tried it so often. There is so much to be done to be a good one, that I often think I could never go through the half of it. I never was baptized, and was always knocked about up to the time I came into the army.'

"He lost his parents while very young, and had no relatives to take an interest in him. Still, he showed signs of a good disposition, and was attracted to the practice of virtue more than many who have had the advantages of a good education. Sister gave him *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, telling him to read it, and he would find therein the way to know how to love and serve God, and become a good Christian.

"After reading it, he believed its teachings; and immediately applied to Father McGrane for baptism, telling him that he wished to become a Christian, now that he had found out

the way. After having a long conversation with him, Father admired his dispositions very much, and told him to come to him that same evening, after Vespers, when he gave him an instruction, and immediately baptized him, fearing that he would soon be sent to his regiment.

"It was really providential, for the next day he received orders to be ready to leave for his regiment within twenty-four hours. He regretted having to leave without being better instructed, that he might be better able—as he said himself—to instruct others whom he might meet who were as he had been. However, he said, he could not complain. Our Lord had done so much for him, and with what different feelings he could now enter the battlefield! He felt he was a child of God, and had a right to his place in Heaven.

"He went away cheerfully, to perform any duty assigned him, offering all to Our Lord in thanksgiving for these favors. Sister gave him a medal, telling him to wear it always, and to place himself under the protection of our Blessed Mother, who would obtain all blessings for him. She also advised him, if his regiment should stop at any place for a considerable time, to apply to the nearest priest for instruction for his First Communion. He was quite delighted at this prospect, and so left for his regiment.

XX.

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

“ DOOR ANDREW, in the bustle of hospital life, had been almost forgotten, when there arrived a letter from a Catholic priest, the Rev. Mr. Butler, showing us that we were not forgotten by Andrew, and that he did not neglect to profit by Sister's advice, to be instructed in the religion which he had so happily embraced. The following is the letter :

“ ‘ COVINGTON, KY., January 5, 1864.

“ ‘ SISTER N——

“ ‘ DEAR SISTER :—By the earnest request of one of your good converts, Andrew J. Hopkins, I send these few lines to express his heartfelt gratitude for your kindness to him during his stay in the hospital, and especially to thank you a thousand times, with your chaplain who baptized him, for all the instruction and spiritual assistance you have given him. I find him a very earnest and pious young man. I gave him constant instruction until he was able to make his First Communion : since which, he has been a second time admitted to that Divine Favor. He asks me to present his compliments to you and your zealous pastor, and assure him that he has faithfully kept his promises to him. Indeed, I regard him as one of

the most pious and sincere converts I have ever known. Be assured that his gratitude to you will never fail. Such cases afford you the hundred fold reward here below, for it is a great happiness to have drawn a soul to the service of God, and to have taught it to seek the things which are above, and not those which are of the earth. And certainly, we have great confidence in the prayers of such souls to obtain for us the graces necessary for our perseverance in those labors of charity by which we serve the Person of Our Saviour in the persons of His poor earthly children. Present my respectful regards to your good chaplain, and also Andrew's earnest thanks. He is quite troubled by forgetting the reverend gentleman's name. Will you kindly reply to this letter, and let me have his name? Andrew also begs me to inquire for John Hughes, a sick soldier in the same ward with him. He has been in daily expectation of being sent to his regiment in East Tennessee. He has been off once, but had to return for want of officers to direct the men. As he may go at any moment, he requests that your reply may be sent to me.

“ ‘With the highest regards, kind Sister, I am

“ ‘Your very humble servant in Christ,

“ ‘T. R. BUTLER, V. G.,

“ ‘Pastor of the Cathedral,

“ ‘Covington, Ky.’ ”

(The date of this letter must have been a mistake either of the good Sister, or of the Rev. Mr. Butler. It was received at the Hos-

pital, according to the Sister's diary, in January, 1865—a year later than the date she has copied. It is probable that Father Butler at the beginning of a new year occasionally used the date of the old year).

“August 8.—A very sad death occurred in Ward T. He was a veteran of many battles, and had his arm torn out from the shoulder by a ball. The wound looked favorable during the first six days, but then commenced sloughing; afterwards, the artery gave way, and he had two severe hemorrhages.

“It was then decided, in consultation, that an incision should be made higher up, in order to secure the artery in a healthy part. All looked bright for the poor sufferer once more, during several days, and he was very grateful for all that was done for him. Stimulants and tonics were frequently given to sustain life, and Sister was constant in watching the least change or the slightest movement.

“But, alas! while washing his face, the artery again gave way, spattering the wall, bed and face of the patient. What was now to be done? Another incision could not be made without loss of life, and the artery could not be again tied otherwise.

“As a last resource, it was decided that the artery must be compressed tightly by the fingers

until a thick clot should form. This duty was assigned to the cadets, fourteen in number, who were to take turns, day and night, thirty minutes at a time. The least change of the fingers from the proper place would allow the blood to flow, and (as the sufferer himself remarked), the next time, he would surely die.

“He lay on his back all the time, perfectly conscious of his danger; and yet, no prayer escaped him, no desire for baptism, no thought apparently, but the longing, anxious desire that he might live, expressed on his pale and sunken features. It was very sad to see him dying thus. Sister did all she could to excite him to contrition, to lead him to make the sacrifice of his life to God, and to place all his confidence in Him, continuing, from time to time, to make aspirations for him.

“He remained in this state from eight o’clock one morning until six o’clock the next. When the moment arrived for the cadet on duty to exchange his painful position with his successor, at the raising of his finger at this hour, the blood spouted forth afresh, sprinkling all around them. All that could be done now was to hastily seize a handkerchief and stuff it into the open wound.

“At this moment, Sister again asked him if he did not desire baptism. He replied that he

did. She hastened to baptize him. A moment more, and he was gone—leaving but a faint hope to us that he was saved. He never professed any religion, and knew very little of the goodness of God; therefore, we trust that He accepted of this weak desire of baptism in his last moments.

“August 16th.—A patient in Ward Z, named Henry Curren, was baptized last night—the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother. He had suffered much during the last ten days, and could not take any nourishment, but Sister did not think that he was in any immediate danger. She spoke to him in the evening about his salvation, and asked him if he did not wish to see a clergyman.

“He replied that he did not, as he could not do him any good. She then reminded him that he was not sure he would recover, and that if he died without being baptized he could never go to Heaven. He promised that he would reflect on her advice, saying at the same time, that he had never attended church, nor professed any religion: that his parents were Methodists, but did not live up to their profession. Sister made a few more remarks, and then bade him ‘good night.’

“About half-past eight o’clock, a message came from the ward to Sister to hasten back as quickly

as possible, that Henry was dying and wanted to see her. Sister, accompanied by another Sister, went over immediately. When they arrived at his bedside, he said, in the most supplicating tones: 'Oh, pray for me, Sisters, for I am dying!' Sister exhorted him to place all his confidence in the good God, who is a good Father to the repentant sinner, and has never rejected any one even in their last hours, if they returned to Him with their whole hearts.

"Sister asked him if he wished to be baptized, and he replied that he wished to be baptized in the religion to which she belonged. He repeated with her the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition, most fervently. He then professed his belief in the principal truths of our holy religion; after which, she baptized him. He asked Sister's name, and also that she would pray for him, said 'Oh, Lord, have mercy on me!' and, repeating with Sister, 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph, have mercy on me!' fell gently back upon his pillow, and breathed his last about ten minutes after receiving baptism. Was not this a consoling death?

XXI.

CONVERSION OF A GERMAN, AND REFORMATION OF AN IRISH SOLDIER.

“EPTEMBER 14th.—Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This morning, we have had the happiness of witnessing another baptism, which evidently shows the workings of Divine Grace. The subject was a German, named Paul Hagen, aged 27 years. He came to the Hospital on July 5th, severely wounded in the arm, but it healed rapidly: and in a few weeks, he was able to visit the Protestant chapel.

“Two weeks since, he asked a little Catholic boy, who slept near him in the ward, if he would go to meeting with him on Sunday afternoon. The boy replied that he could not go with him, but would he not come to the Sister’s chapel? At first, he refused; but afterward, agreed to go. They belong to the same regiment, and are greatly attached to each other, which, no doubt, was the reason for his yielding so readily.

“Our devotions on Sunday afternoon are the Rosary and Vespers, which, of course, he could not understand, as he cannot speak a word of English; but our Blessed Mother must surely

have interceded in his behalf, for he left the chapel determined to go again, and asked his little friend when there would be another 'meeting.' The boy told him, on the following Tuesday; and Paul was one of the first in the chapel on that morning, blessing himself, and taking Holy Water, as he saw the others doing. He remained kneeling, with his head bowed down, nearly all the time of Mass.

"He told his little friend, whose name is Fred, that he would like very much to see a German priest, and that he intended going to the Sisters' chapel for the future. He now visits it daily. Little Fred, who acts as interpreter for him, came to the Sister quite delighted with the good news; and wanted to know when the German priest would come again.

"Sister told him that he would come on Thursday, to hear the German confessions; and that his friend would then have a good opportunity to see him, if he still desired it. Paul repaired to the chapel on Thursday at two o'clock, and remained waiting until nearly five o'clock; but the priest was unavoidably detained in the city, and did not get there.

"However, he said Mass for us the next morning: and afterwards, heard the confessions. Paul remained in the chapel all the time, but did not go in to speak to him, as the thought

occurred to him that he must begin his confession at once, and not knowing how to do it, he thought it best to defer it until he was a little better instructed.

“Sister gave him a German prayer-book, and a medal of our Blessed Mother. The next Thursday, he had a long conversation with the German Father, who said that he found him in most excellent dispositions, and would send him a catechism which would instruct him as to baptism.

“On Monday following (September 14th), he was baptized. The Sister (in whose ward he was), with little Fred, acted as sponsors. Immediately after, he made his first confession, and asked for some books that would prepare him for his First Communion. He remained but a few days longer in the Hospital, as he was considered well enough to return to his regiment. So the Sisters had not the happiness of seeing him make his First Communion, for he was obliged to leave at very short notice.

“Two or three others have made their First Communion within the last few weeks. One of these was a youth named Michael Davis, in Ward W. He was born in Ireland, and lost his mother while very young. He came to this country shortly afterwards with his father who, he says, has always been a drunkard.

“Soon after his arrival, he was employed by a sea-captain; and from that time, was in the company of those who professed no religion. It is not wonderful that he ceased to practise his. He entered the army about two years since, and was brought here from the battlefield of Gettysburg, with a very severe wound in his hand.

“He told Sister, at once, of the careless life he had led, and promised her that he would begin at once to prepare for a general confession. Sister gave him a prayer-book, catechism, and medal, desiring him to place himself under the protection of Our Blessed Mother.

“A few days later, having been put under the influence of ether, in order that his wound might be probed, he imagined, while in that state, that he was going to hell, and that those who were standing around him were devils, who were waiting to receive his soul. He would cry out most pitifully: ‘Don’t kill me yet! I am not ready to die yet! I want to see the Sister.’

“He said afterwards that he could never get the horrible feeling he experienced out of his mind; and that, if it had been reality, he could not have been more frightened. He was now more anxious than ever to prepare for his First Communion: and often said, when Sister would

ask him why he did not avail himself of a pass to the city in the afternoon, like the others, that he refused because he was afraid he would yield to temptation, like so many of his companions, who often came back drunk.

“On another occasion, when he was pressed to go to the Reading Room, where there was to be a grand concert, he refused answering until, watching his opportunity, he asked Sister if there would be anything wrong in his going, fearing, as he said, that it might be a snare to draw him to their meetings.

“His companions often made him a subject of ridicule, and would attack his religion indirectly. Then, again, they would pretend that he was influenced by the regard which he entertained for the Sisters. But to all the taunts, he never answered a word.

“He made his First Communion on the nineteenth of September; and from that day forward, until he left the Hospital, which was a few weeks later, he continued as edifying, as fervent, as he had commenced; and he promised Sister, when leaving, that he would always try to be faithful to the practice of our holy religion. We have great reason to think that he will keep his promise. God grant that he may!

XXII.

VISIT OF GENERALS SIGEL AND HAMMOND TO SATTERLEE. A THANKSGIVING FROLIC.

“EPTEMBER 26.—Robert McGill, a patient in Ward P, was baptized this morning. He has been sick a long time from an attack of typhoid fever. He was a Protestant, and was always much prejudiced against the Catholic Church, although his wife was a practical Catholic. She was constant in her attentions to him, but avoided speaking on the subject of religion, fearing that it would only irritate, instead of doing him good.

“She often begged Sister to mention it to him, saying that he understood the Catholic religion very well, and that pride and regard for his family kept him from embracing it. Dr. West, who is the Protestant chaplain, had been with him the day before, praying with him, and exhorting him to place all his hopes of salvation in the Lord Jesus. He then took leave, promising to come again.

“McGill’s poor wife was in great distress. She could not make up her mind to see him

die a Protestant; and although she said nothing, she continued praying to our Blessed Mother with Sister, that she would obtain his conversion.

“The same evening, the doctors said that the poor patient could not last during the night; therefore, Sister remained with him until twelve o'clock. When all became quiet in the ward, she asked him if he was perfectly satisfied to die as he had lived, or did he not rather desire to die in the One True Church, of which his good wife was a member?

“He replied: ‘I do wish to die in that Church.’ He wished to see a priest at once. Sister sent to Father immediately, but he did not come until the next morning; therefore, at his request, after a brief explanation, she gave him conditional Baptism. He became a little better toward morning, and was now very anxious to see a priest.

“As soon as Father arrived, he went to the ward, and performed the ceremony of Baptism; after which, he heard his confession, gave him Holy Communion, and anointed him. He then said some prayers and aspirations, which the poor patient repeated most fervently after him. He bade him ‘good-bye’ in this world, expressing the hope that he would meet him in a better one, bidding him to be of good courage,

and keep himself calm and recollected. He left him with the best dispositions.

"Some hours later, the minister came as usual to see him, saying, as he drew near the bedside, 'Well, my friend, how are you this morning?' The sick man immediately answered: 'I do not want to see you now, sir, for I have been baptized in the Catholic Church.' This he said in the presence of his wife. The minister soon left, and inquired of the Sister if what he had heard was true; and, if so, he thought it was very strange.

"Sister replied that all enjoyed liberty of conscience here as elsewhere: and that her patient wished to become a Catholic, believing that in that Church alone he could be saved. At this, he looked very much nettled, and went off, saying that he wished her patient God-speed.

"His poor wife went home in the evening, (as he was apparently much better), with the promise that she would come again, the next day. Sister also left him for the night, after seeing that everything necessary for him was provided; and our convert, George Steward, who was in the ward, took his place at the bedside.

"About twelve o'clock, he had a change for the worse; and before one, he had breathed his last sigh. His wife, on her arrival the next day,

was inconsolable to think that neither she nor Sister was with him when he died; but she, afterwards, became more reconciled, remembering that if he had died at home (as she had at first desired), he would have been surrounded by his friends, and might, in all probability, have died a Protestant, contrary to his own convictions. May he rest in peace!

“September 27th.—Quite an excitement was created, about two o’clock, by the visit of Generals Sigel and Hammond. The former lost a leg in one of the late battles of Gettysburg; and has been, since that time, under the care of the Sisters in Washington. He is now able to go about on crutches.

“Dr. Hayes, with the principal surgeons, accompanied them in making the circuit of the Hospital. The patients, all eager to see once more their good old generals, who had stood by them so valiantly in the terrible engagement, came out of the wards as best they could, many of them also on crutches, and crowded in the corridors, to cheer and welcome them as they passed along.

“Sister thought one poor young lad, who was very sick, would feel the privation of not being able to see them; but he replied to her words of consolation: ‘Do not feel sorry on my account. I would any time rather see a

Sister than a general, for it was a Sister, who came to me when I was unable to help myself, in an old barn near Gettysburg, where I was. She dressed my wounds and gave me drink, and took care of me until I came here.' The poor boy is a Protestant, and never saw a Sister before that time.

"Thanksgiving Day.—Quite an interesting little party assembled in the laundry, yesterday evening. The poor laundresses have been so very generous, for some time past, that Sister N. consented to let them have a little party as soon as Sister Gonzaga would return from St. Joseph's, where she has been for the last two weeks.

"They came quite early, yesterday morning; and hastened to finish all their work by noon; then, washed and dressed in all their finery, which they had brought with them for the occasion.

"Sister N. arranged the tables, which were covered with snow-white cloths, upon which were placed cakes, preserves, apples, candies, etc. In the centre, and at each end of the tables, were placed handsome bunches of flowers. The pitchers shone like silver, and the knives and forks looked as if they had never been used. The tea-set was white—in fine, everything looked nice, and our poor washwomen were delighted.

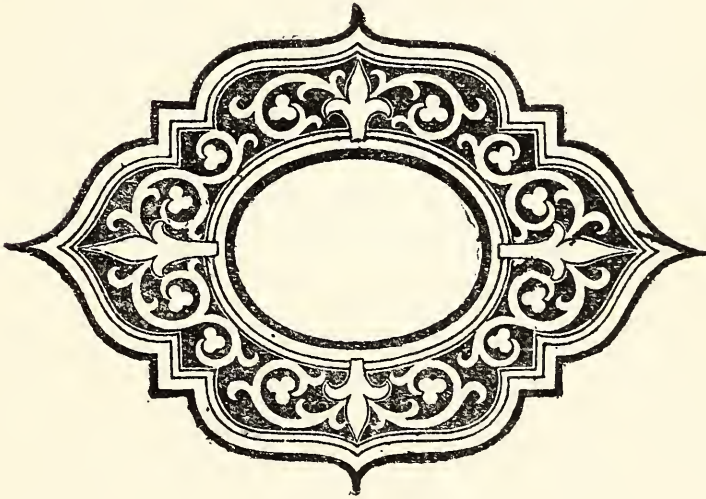
“At four o'clock, Sister N. informed them that everything was in readiness; and sent for Sister Gonzaga, who opened the afternoon with a few kind remarks. The doctor, whose duty it is to prescribe for them, was present. Two of the patients who have violins had been previously requested to come and play for them; and they—with the exception of two or three small boys—were the only ‘men’ present. They danced until nearly seven o'clock.

“The old women gave us Irish jigs and reels to perfection, while the younger ones danced cotillions. There was not a loud or unbecoming word spoken during the whole evening; and they acted as nicely as might be expected from a better class. They all seemed well pleased, and expressed their thanks to the Sisters for honoring them with their presence.

“Sister Gonzaga said grace for them before taking their places at supper; and afterwards, made a few pleasant remarks, to which they listened with the greatest respect. The doctors then took their leave, after having expressed their thanks to the Sisters for allowing them the favor of being present, which they considered a great compliment.

“After supper, one of the girls in the name of all, presented Sister Gonzaga with a large cake, nicely frosted. She was obliged to accept it, else she would have wounded their feelings.

“They then bade us good-night at a quarter to eight, and returned to their humble homes, well pleased with their evening’s entertainment. I must not omit to tell you, that they defrayed the expense of all the refreshments themselves. Each one contributed a little beforehand, for, of course, they knew they could not have had it in any other way.



XXIII.

CHARLEY DUKEN.

“CTOBER 25th.—Two patients made their First Communion, this morning. The first was a patient in Ward W, named Charles Duken,* who has been here since the seventh of July; the other belonged to Ward N, and was baptized on the fifteenth. Charles Duken was badly wounded in the leg, and suffered intensely. Each time that Sister would go to him or perform any little service for him, he expressed his gratitude to her, and told her that, if he got better, he ‘would turn over a new leaf,’ and become a better man. He seemed so anxious that Sister would speak to him of religion.

“A few days later, he became very ill, and the doctor had no hopes of his recovery. He was himself conscious of his danger. He again spoke to Sister of his great desire to live, that he might join some church.

“She then asked him if he had ever been baptized, and he told her that he had not. She

* Possibly corrupted from Dugan. May not Charley have had some good old Irish Catholic ancestors praying for him in Heaven?
—E. C. D.

asked him if he knew how necessary it was in order to be saved. She then quoted to him that portion of the Scripture which commands all to be baptized. He said that he knew nothing of it, and clasping his hands together, he exclaimed: 'For God's sake, Sister, don't let me slip through your hands without Baptism!' She promised him to do all in her power for him, and asked which one of the chaplains he desired to see. He replied: 'Your chaplain, if he will come to me.'

"A few hours later, he was baptized by Father McGrane, expressing all the time the most lively sentiments of faith, gratitude and contrition. The same evening, the doctors still considered him a hopeless case; and appointed a night-watch to notice the least change.

"Sister went to him, soon afterwards, and took from her pocket a medal of the Blessed Mother, telling him of the many miracles that had been effected by wearing it in her honor, and with confidence in her protection; adding, that if he would wear it with the same confidence, perhaps She would cure him. He listened attentively, then grasped the precious medal, and promised to keep it faithfully; and, after making a few aspirations for him, she bade him 'good-night,' hardly allowing herself to hope that she would see him again.

“But, thanks to Our Blessed Mother! she found him much better, the next morning, although in much trouble, because, as he said, he had lost his ‘piece,’ and feared that some one had stolen it. Sister soon found it, and this afforded him the most childlike joy.

“The doctor was pleased to see the great improvement that had taken place. Charley, meanwhile, procured a string long enough to reach to his wounded leg, to which he fastened his precious ‘piece.’ He is firmly convinced that it is the Blessed Mother who obtained his cure. He improved rapidly from that day, and was able, in a few weeks, to walk on crutches.

“His wounds have become quite clean, and have already commenced to heal. This is the more remarkable, as there were many others in the ward whose wounds had undergone the same treatment, and although not considered so dangerous as Charley’s, were supposed to be doing very well, who are not yet able to leave their beds.

“Charley’s first visit was to the chapel; and he rises every morning, at five o’clock, in order to be the first there. Could you see his fine open countenance, so very pale, and his attenuated form bending over his crutches, to take Holy Water and make his genuflexion, with so much faith and devotion, you would say ‘What

a pious Catholic that man must be! How edifying he is!’

“He listens to Father’s discourses with the greatest attention and delight, and counts the time long until the following Sunday. His wife came to see him about a month after his arrival here. He told her of his becoming a Catholic, and of his feeling so much happier than ever before. His great fear then was, lest she should show any displeasure towards Sister; but he was delighted when, after her return home, he received a letter from her, expressing her kind feeling toward Sister.

“He petitioned for a furlough a few weeks later, that he might, as he said, have his children baptized at once; and, if possible, convince his wife of the great advantage to be derived from being a member of the One True Church. This, he readily effected, contrary to his expectations. He was always so good and kind, she said, that she was willing to do all that he thought was for the best, now that the Lord had spared him to her; therefore, she consented to apply for instruction at once, and have their little children baptized.

“He returned to the Hospital quite pleased and very grateful for the many favors he had received from God through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, to whom he believes that

he owes everything. He applied himself at once to prepare for his First Communion. Sister N. gave him instructions in the chapel, daily. Finally, he made it on the twenty-fifth of October, in the most edifying dispositions. He and his companions sobbed like little children, and seemed unable to restrain their emotions of joy.



XXIV.

OTHER INTERESTING CONVERSIONS.

“HE history of his companion is not less interesting than that of Charley. He was quiet and retiring in his manners, and at first avoided speaking to Sister. One day, as he was sitting by the bedside of a young man who was suffering very much, he took up a book that was on the table, called the *Hours of the Passion*. The youth told him that it was Sister who had loaned him the book. He asked if he would lend it to him to read.

“From that day, he sought every opportunity to ask some questions about the Catholic religion; and desired a book that would instruct him more fully. Sister gave him *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, and *The Grounds of the Old Religion proved from Scripture*, together with several others, equally instructive.

“He requested Sister to take him up to the chapel, and explain to him the Stations, or the Way of the Cross, for which afterwards he had a great devotion. He commenced to attend Mass and Vespers, from that time, and always

spent an hour in the chapel every day, although he frequently said how unworthy he was to go there! We often found him there, bathed in tears, and praying most devoutly.

“At last, he told Sister that he was determined to become a Catholic at once, no matter what might be the consequence; that he never professed any religion before, but had always said he would never join any church until he should be convinced that he had *found the True One*.

“He was sure he had now found it, and he desired to be baptized at once. Father hesitated to baptize him immediately, telling him not to be in such a hurry. The truth was, he feared that Sister might have urged him, which was not the case. Besides, his wife not having been baptized either, he dreaded the consequences, if he were not sincere.

“At length, however, the poor man’s fervor and perseverance prevailed, and Father consented to baptize him on the feast of St. Teresa. From that time, he was more fervent than ever, frequently spending hours in the chapel, and shedding an abundance of tears. In truth, he seemed to experience some of those emotions of love which made St. Augustine cry out: ‘Too late have I known Thee! Too late have I loved Thee! O Beauty ever ancient and ever new!’

He told Sister that he could not express his feelings of happiness in the One True Church.

“He made his First Communion on the twenty-fifth of October; and, immediately, procured a furlough to visit his wife and children, that he might tell them of his new religion. In answer to his wife’s fears, he told her that the change would not separate them, but on the contrary, it would oblige him to be a better husband than he had been. She knew nothing of the Catholic religion, as they had always lived in the country, far from any Catholic church. Therefore, she was not prejudiced against it, and readily yielded to his persuasion to read and study for herself.

“Many of their friends, who were also good, simple, country people, expressed a desire that he would leave some of his books of instruction for them to read; and this, he did. His daughter insisted on having his rosary; and all were pleased with the accounts he gave of the Catholics, and of the Sisters. His wife and children, he felt sure, would become Catholics; and, happy with these pleasing anticipations of the future, he returned to the Hospital, about a week ago. He is now preparing for Confirmation, which we hope will be administered here before Christmas.

“Two others belonging to Sister N.’s ward became Catholics. One is remarkably fervent;

When he came to the Hospital with a very severe wound in the face, immediately under the eye, Sister took charge of dressing it herself; and during these moments, she would speak to him of Our Lord's sufferings, and tell him to try and offer all that he suffered in union with them, in atonement for whatever sins he might have committed during his past life. He listened very attentively: for all she said was new to him, as he had not been baptized, and had lost both parents.

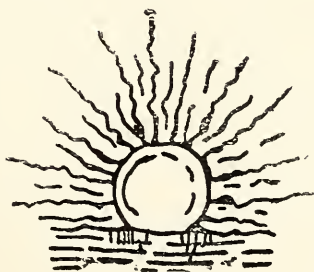
"Day after day, this simple country boy would ask Sister to tell him more about the sufferings of Our Lord, and what he must do and believe that he might join that Church which taught such a beautiful doctrine; and he often requested her to read him some of the meditations on the Passion. Sister also taught him his prayers and the catechism.

"The other patient, who had received his first impressions of grace at his bedside, also assisted him much by telling him what he himself had learned through reading, and by Father's instructions. They used to spend hours conversing on the subject; and whenever an opportunity presented itself, they would ask Sister to explain to them anything which they could not understand.

"The Feast of St. Teresa arrived, and poor 'No. 7,' as Sister calls him, was still too weak

to walk up to the Chapel. He had hoped, all along, that he would be able to receive baptism with his friend. The disappointment was almost too much for his weak state. One could scarcely believe that he would regret the delay so deeply ; but, when Sister reminded him that such a want of patience was very unlike the silent endurance of Our Lord under His sufferings, he immediately dried his eyes, and endeavored to become more reconciled ; but, not until Sister promised him that she would be his godmother, if she should get permission.

“It was as he had desired, and he was baptized on the twenty-seventh of October, the vigil of the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude. From that time, he visited the Blessed Sacrament daily, and had the greatest devotion to the Stations of the Cross, which Sister explained to him, one by one. She also gave him a crucifix, which he always carries.”



XXV.

CLOSING DAYS OF THE WAR AT SATTERLEE.

“E had the Forty Hours' Devotion on Sunday, the fourteenth of November; and 'No. 7' was one of the first in Chapel that morning; but, the effort of rising so early caused him to feel so weak during the remainder of the day, that he was not able to attend the instruction of that afternoon, nor the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. On the following Sunday, the feast of the Presentation, he made his First Communion; and is now preparing, with his friend, for Confirmation.

“James Cook, the third patient of the same ward, has been reading and studying much longer than the other two; and he desired to read other works, unfavorable to the Catholic doctrines, before he should decide: although he believed the Catholic Church to be the Only True One. No one urged him. Sister prayed for him, but avoided the subject, except when he asked her a direct question.

“One circumstance gave her hope concerning him—that was, he believed in praying to our Blessed Mother, and recited the *Hail Mary* every

day. The way he acquired this practice was as follows: he found on the battlefield, after the battle, a small white rosary, which he supposed must have belonged to one of the dead soldiers. He admired it, and took it with him, although he did not know the use of it. When he came here, he showed it to Sister, and asked for an explanation of it. This was his first lesson in Catholic doctrine.

“He admired the devotion to the Mother of the Saviour; and said, that he would now value his beads more than ever. He applied himself at once to learn the *Hail Mary*. At length, after reading many controversial works, and holding many conversations with Father McGrane, Grace finally triumphed, and he too was regenerated in the holy waters of Baptism. This was on the twenty-seventh of October; and he made his First Communion on the twenty-fifth of November. He is still here, and is a model for some of our Catholic boys, many of whom, alas! forget to practise the religion of their fathers.

“Another baptism was effected in Ward L, some time ago. Sister could only gain the poor sufferer’s consent, when, according to his request, she attempted to raise him a little, and discovered he was bleeding to death. His wound had often bled before; but it was understood that this would be the last time.

"Sister immediately told him of his state, and that he had but a few minutes to live. He then desired her to baptize him, as, he said, he wanted to go to heaven. He cried out in a loud voice: 'O Lord! have mercy on me! And grant that, since I cannot see my parents again on earth, I may see them on the other side of Jordan!' He immediately expired. Such deaths, although not as fervent as we should desire, leave us, at least, some hopes of their salvation."

The following is the list of the Sisters of Charity at the West Philadelphia Military Hospital, THE SATTERLEE, during the War of the Rebellion. The titles of these holy heroic women must indeed have been esteemed before God and His angels, as shining gloriously forth among

"—the few, the immortal names that were not born to die."

June 9, 1862.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace,
Superioress. | 9. Sister Augustine Valentine. |
| 2. Sister Mary Louis. | 10. Sister Dolores Smith. |
| 3. Sister Louise Collins. | 11. Sister Mary Xavier Lucot. |
| 4. Sister Ann Joseph Dough-
erty. | 12. Sister Angela Mahony. |
| 5. Sister Josephine Keleher. | 13. Sister Maria Noonan. |
| 6. Sister Ann Maria Boniface. | 14. Sister Catharine Harty. |
| 7. Sister Clare McGerald. | 15. Sister Edna Heney. |
| 8. Sister Mary Cremen. | 16. Sister Margaret Hepp. |
| | 17. Sister Philippa Connelly. |
| | 18. Sister Delphine Wivelle. |
| | 19. Sister Neri Matthews. |

20. Sister Onesime.
21. Sister Teresa McKenna.
22. Sister Aloysia Daley.
23. Sister Stella Moran.
24. Sister Elizabeth Freze.
25. Sister Adeline Byrnes.
26. Sister Eleanora Tyler.
27. Sister Vincent Saunders.
28. Sister Mary Joseph Sinnott.
29. Sister Magdalen Groell.
30. Sister Clotilda Welty.
31. Sister Pacifica Ulrich.
32. Sister Alphonsa McNichols.
33. Sister Annie O'Leary.
34. Sister Mary Laurence Kane.
35. Sister Felix McQuaid.
36. Sister Mary Bernard Moore.
37. Sister Henrietta.
38. Sister Alix Merceret.
39. Sister Martha Moran.
40. Sister Mary Jane Douglass.
41. Sister Mary Alice Delahunty.
42. Sister Vincentia Waltzing.
43. Sister Martina Tragesser.
44. Sister Marie Mulkern.
45. Sister Julia Fitzgerald.
46. Sister Loretta McGee.
47. Sister Angeline Reilly.
48. Sister Gabriella McCarthy.
49. Sister Petronilla Breen.
50. Sister Amie Dougherty.
51. Sister Marcella Finnigan.
52. Sister Frances Griffin.
53. Sister Mary Josephine Gamel.
54. Sister deChantal Costello.
55. Sister Mary Eliza Dougherty.
56. Sister Dionysia O'Keefe.
57. Sister Cecilia Groell.

1863.

58. Sister Euphrasia Mattingly.
59. Sister Mary Martha Lynch.
60. Sister Mary Harmer.
61. Sister Mary Bernard Farrell.
62. Sister Ann Teresa Roche.
63. Sister Amelia Davis.
64. Sister Severina Relihan.
65. Sister Rosalie Bouligny.
66. Sister Irene McCourt.
67. Sister Clementine McCaffery.
68. Sister Felicita Puls.
69. Sister Cornelia McDonnell.
70. Sister Agnes Weaver.
71. Sister Euphrasia Wittenanes.
72. Sister Ann Maria Shaughnessy.
73. Sister Generosa Foley.
74. Sister Julia Sheehan.

1864.

75. Sister Genevieve Kavanaugh.
76. Sister Celestine Adelsberger.
77. Sister Bernardine Farrell.
78. Sister Josephine Edelen.
79. Sister Antonia Asmuth.
80. Sister Alphonsa McBride.
81. Sister Catharine McQuaid.
82. Sister Clara Doyle.
83. Sister Eloise Lacroix.
84. Sister Ann Joseph Cummin.
85. Sister Francis McDonald.
86. Sister Mary Xavier Vendrome.

1865.

87. Sister Genevieve Garvey.
88. Sister Agnes McDermott.
89. Sister Sylveria O'Neill.

XXVI.

LAST ECHOES FROM SATTERLEE.



IN the foregoing records of SATTERLEE, whenever the simple term "*Sister*" appears, our readers will understand it to designate our own dear Sister Gonzaga. She was the SISTER-SERVANT of the Hospital—an appellation which originated with St. Vincent de Paul himself, in 1642. At one of his famous Conferences, he said to his spiritual daughters :

"'The *Annunciades** call their Superior, *Ancelle* (or hand-maid). That made me think of you. Henceforth, you also, will give no other title to your Superioress than that of *Sister-Servant*—a glorious title, which she shares with the head of the Church, for all pontifical briefs bear this signature: 'Clement, Leo, etc., Servant of the Servants of Jesus Christ.'"

During the three years which the Sisters passed at the Military Hospital of West Philadelphia, they attended *over eighty thousand sick or wounded soldiers* ! It is not difficult to form

* This was a religious order instituted by St. Jane of Valois, the illustrious spouse of Louis XII. of France, and was intended to specially honor the ten principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin, presumably in the mystery of her Annunciation.

an idea from this, of the ceaseless and most arduous labors of these unselfish women. The number whom Sister Gonzaga alone cared for, instructed, and baptized, is remarkable of itself. She was like a ray of sunshine in the midst of that great abode of suffering, disease, and death. Many of the poor fellows under her charge were wholly ignorant of all religious truth. One of them, a sailor, on the death of a comrade, composed and recited the following senseless and blasphemous doggerel in lieu of a prayer—seemingly a parody on the *Pater Noster*—which Sister preserved as an instance of the man's utter want of all saving knowledge:

“Our Father, come short of eleven,
Come, haul him down the lane,
Owed a man ten pounds,
Paid him eleven shillings,
Now hoist him down again. Amen.”

How mysteriously, how efficaciously, did our gracious God, in those bitter years of the Rebellion, draw eternal good out of the dread evil of war—yea, even of the unnatural war of brother against brother! The fortunes of battle and the unusual experience of life in a Sisters' Hospital, then afforded to many a well-meaning, simple soul—many a suffering and dying non-Catholic—an opportunity of knowing the loveliness and

truth of the Church of Christ, which could never have been theirs in the normal conditions of their past lives.

To hundreds of our brave soldier-boys at the old Military Hospital in the 'Sixties, the counsels of divine Grace came with the resistless force and sweetness of a silver clarion, proclaiming to them: "If, to-day, ye hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your hearts! For, *now*, is the acceptable time of your young manhood—now, is the day of your everlasting salvation!"

It was one of her devoted companions, who thus wrote of Sister Gonzaga, during those eventful days at SATTERLEE: "Every evening, she made a tour of the Wards; and although so quiet, she was the first to enjoy a good laugh. She loved to make us repeat at the evening recreation, any funny little incident that had occurred during the day. She used to say that a laugh did the Sisters good. She often reminded us that the Wards were our 'enclosure,' where we should edify all who came in contact with us. . . .

"When the smallpox broke out (as it did several times) among the soldiers: and the poor stricken ones were removed, by official orders, to the small-pox hospital, it was so sad to see these poor boys weeping, like children, because they had to leave the Sisters. Often have I seen our

dear Sister Gonzaga shed bitter tears when the ambulance came to take 'her boys' (as she called them) away. They pleaded so hard to be left with the Sisters, that finally (as our Sisters' diaries have already recorded), the Surgeon-General obtained permission to keep them in a camp at a distance from the hospital, where tents were made very comfortable for their occupancy.

"Sister Josephine Edelin was appointed to take charge of them, she having had the dread disorder; but, shortly after, she was taken ill, and our dear Sister Gonzaga replaced her in charge of these plague-stricken soldiers. No pleading or coaxing could induce her to relinquish this work of love to any one else. The poor patients (as we have already seen) were greatly benefited by drinking freely of the "Pitcher Plant" tea. Our Sister was very skilful and experienced in the healing art, being acquainted with many simple, old-time remedies which she was ever eager to impart to us. She formed at the Hospital a medicine-class, as she called it, in which we learned many things that have since proved of great service to us."

The following letters of grateful appreciation were addressed to Sister Gonzaga and her co-workers by Surgeon-General Hayes and his Assistant, Surgeon James Williams, when those

devoted nurses withdrew from the charge of Satterlee, in 1865. Their expressions of admiration and esteem are the more valuable to us and our readers, because they emanated, unsolicited, from the pens of non-Catholic officials of the highest standing, of unquestioned veracity and honor, in those bygone days when our religious Sisterhoods were far less generally and favorably known than at present :

SATTERLEE U. S. A. GENERAL HOSPITAL,
WEST PHILADELPHIA, PA., July 25, 1865.

SISTER GONZAGA :

Sister Superior.—In terminating your connection with this hospital, at its closing, permit me to express to yourself and the Sisters who have labored with you, my most sincere and hearty thanks for the faithful and efficient manner in which you have performed your duties.

Joining it, at its foundation, under an impulse of true Christian charity, you have remained true and steadfast to the end ; suffering discomfort, working hard, early and late, never murmuring, you have won my gratitude, and the gratitude of every true soldier, and have confirmed me in the profound esteem which I have always entertained for your noble order.

I shall always remember you with the most lively pleasure, and if it should ever be in my power to serve any of the Sisters, I hope they will not hesitate to demand the service of me.

My very best wishes go with you for your future prosperity and happiness.

May the knowledge of the good which you have done to the sick and wounded and weary soldiers of our common country be to you a satisfaction and reward.

Ever truly and sincerely

Your friend,

I. J. HAYES.

Surgeon U. S. Vols., and Brevt. Lt. Col.,
Commd'g Hospital.

SATTERLEE U. S. A. GENERAL HOSPITAL,
WEST PHILADELPHIA, PA., August 3, 1865.

To the Sisters of Charity attached to the Hospital:

Sisters.:—With the most pleasurable feelings I have received from you a beautiful and elaborately-worked match-holder, as a “token of remembrance,” as you express yourselves, for my kindness; and I accept the same with gratitude.

Whatever kindness I may have displayed toward you, has been in the course of my duty.

If any act of mine has been conducive to your comfort, or has aided in your wishes, it is only the result of a desire to benefit or assist, when in my power, my fellow Christians. In my slight professional attendance, I have been gratified by the most happy results, and by warm expressions of thanks.

Since my connection with this Hospital, I have had ample opportunity of watching your devotion to the

sick, and witnessing the many acts of kindness, and the beneficial results which have attended your labors.

In parting, permit me to express the great satisfaction I have had in my association with you for the past three years, and to tender you my sincere wishes for your future health, happiness and prosperity.

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. servt.,

JAMES WILLIAMS,
Act. Asst. Surg. U. S. A.
As. Exec. Officer.

In a historical sketch of SATTERLEE, prepared and published in 1863 by Rev. Nathaniel West, D. D., Protestant chaplain of that Hospital, Dr. West replies succinctly to a number of questions proposed to him by certain non-Catholics as to the origin, character, and mission of the Sisters of Charity. After explaining that the society was founded by "a remarkable man, named Vincent de Paul," in 1660; and organized by "a noble virgin, named Louise Le Gras," chaplain West goes on to say that "the Sisters of Charity (of that epoch) had for their office to attend the poor, who 'were sick, infirm, and confined to their beds!' But no pecuniary remuneration for their services.

"This," comments the writer: "is just what

they do in our hospital, and in all hospitals and infirmaries where they are found. They appear never to have changed, but to have *semper idem* written upon them from first to last. Day and night, hot or cold, whether the duty be pleasant or disagreeable, it is ever with them, *semper idem*—i. e., *always the same!*

“They are (here) forty-two in number, being subject to a ‘Lady Superior,’ SISTER GONZAGA, to whom, as ‘obedient children,’ they all bow with profound submission. They are alike amenable to the commandant of the Hospital as any others.”

Dr. West, in reply to several questions, having explained that the Sisters do not prescribe for the sick or wounded, but simply carry to the patients the remedies prescribed by the Surgeons and prepared by the Apothecaries, and distribute to the sick the extra diet allotted to them, takes pains to state that the Sisters individually get nothing but their expenses paid. The governmental-allowance for their services is paid over to their Order as the Sisterhood of Charity.

To the last question of all: “But do not they (the Sisters) try to make converts to their church from amongst our soldiers in the hospital?”—this fair-minded Protestant divine makes answer: “If they do, and succeed, this kind of conversion is not confined to the Sisters alone. Who will

blame a Protestant for making a Protestant out of a Catholic? But, as these questions, and many others are asked by divers persons, "it is proper," he continues: "to now state, that it is most firmly believed that better nurses, better attendants on the sick, more noiseless, ceaseless performers of services in the hospital than these Sisters, could not be found. And it is in this light, these self-denying ladies are viewed. No matter what the character of their services is, they are ever at their post. The work assigned must be done, whoever does it: and it must be done in the manner required. And it will be hard to find any establishment of equal magnitude to the Satterlee United States Army General Hospital, where neatness, cleanliness, arrangement, order and adaptation to the end designed, are better contrived and observed; and by all employed, irrespective of religious creeds and ceremonies. This is that which has raised the character of the hospital, and of him who holds the charge of it, to their present exalted elevation. The Sisters were placed in the hospital by order of the Surgeon-General on the reception of the first patients, and there is probably not a hospital in the public service that would not be glad to have them, if the supply was equal to the demand."

But, to return to the pleasing and touching

relations between the patients at Satterlee and their devoted nurses.

The gratitude and devotion of the soldiers to the Sisters were often manifested in original, and most amusing ways. One convalescent either bought, or proposed buying, a black silk dress and a pair of gold ear-rings for his favorite Sister; and another, when "on leave," ran all over town, seeking in every millinery shop for a new white *cornette*, such as the Sisters wore (and which he did not know were never purchased in such quarters), to replace the old, and sometimes blood-bespattered bonnet that covered his faithful nurse's head.

During all the time of the War, Sister Gonzaga continued in charge of St. Joseph's Asylum, Seventh and Spruce streets, which she visited weekly. Sister Mary John (of whom we shall have more to say presently), was invaluable to her in this latter work. They were two great, noble souls, most closely united in heart, sentiment and principles.

After the close of the Civil War, Sister Gonzaga, to the joy of all, returned from the Hospital to take up, once more, her permanent abode at the dear old Asylum. There, her "soldier boys," as she terms them, frequently called on her. They could never forget her devoted attentions to them in the days of their sore affliction; and always

expressed to her the sincerest gratitude for her goodness. All who had come in contact with her revered and loved her ; she commanded universal respect and esteem.

Says our excellent convent-annalist: "During the long years she passed in the Asylum, God and His recording Angel alone knew all the good she effected. Ah! how many sorrowing hearts she comforted—how many souls she brought back to God—how many children she instructed! Every Thursday, even in her advanced age, found her giving her usual weekly instruction to our orphans. She was admirably adapted to the training of children ; and never had the least difficulty in controlling them. She was accustomed to say: 'If you wish to manage children, you must first learn to control yourself.'

"She instilled into our minds her conviction, that it was a binding duty to do everything in our power to advance the children—never permitting them to leave their classes except for the gravest cause. She also insisted that we should teach them to work. I have often said to her that I would prefer to do such or such a thing myself, 'sooner than be bothered with the children.' She would answer with her wonted quiet, even tones: 'My Sister, can you do this in conscience? Are you not bound to teach these little ones to work, so that they may

make, hereafter, an honest living in the world? I consider it an obligation most binding on us.' ”

Her heart suffered much when the time came for the children to leave the Asylum. Her watchful, maternal eye ever followed them in that great, outside world, so full of temptations and pitfalls for their innocence and inexperience. It seemed one of her greatest pleasures to have these children return to visit their old home. She insisted upon their punctual attendance at the monthly meetings of their confraternity—the Children of Mary; and no pains were spared to make these little reunions happy and strengthening to the young guests.

“ Sister would often tell us never to repulse a child or a young girl,” relates one of her devoted companions, “ but ever to treat them with kindness, putting ourselves in their place, and dealing with them as we would wish to be dealt with ourselves. Many of these poor children never knew any other mother than the Sisters—being placed at the Asylum sometimes in early infancy—hence, knowing the deep interest in their welfare, and the unselfish devotedness of their kind care-takers (always greeting them with a loving smile and a gentle word), it was most natural that they should fly to us in all their trials and difficulties.

“Every year, on HOLY INNOCENTS’ day, December the twenty-eighth, they were invited to come home to Seventh and Spruce streets, to celebrate the feast with the Sisters and children; and oh! what a joyous gathering this was! Children and grandchildren eagerly and lovingly accepted Sister Gonzaga’s cordial invitation to the household festivity.

“What a charming spectacle to behold!—such a multitude of past and present inmates of the Asylum, seated at long tables covered with an abundance of the good things of the happy Christmastide, provided by generous patrons and benefactors! Never will I forget the impression it made upon me when I first saw it! There, were Sister Gonzaga and the other Sisters, wearing white aprons—servants, indeed, of the servants of God—for they recognized in each child, big or little, a member of Christ—and waiting humbly and joyously on the happy family. Before leaving the table, all the children sang ‘*God bless our Home!*’ with the sincerity and ardor of loving, grateful hearts.”

On one of these interesting occasions, the following lines were recited by a former pupil—then, a mature woman—as a

GREETING TO SISTER GONZAGA FROM HER OLD
CHILDREN ON HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY.

The scarlet berries glisten
 'Mid the holly branches green ;
The Christmas trees are shedding
 Their soft splendors o'er the scene.

The Shepherds and the Sages
 Have long since come and gone ;
And the Star above the Stable
 Hath faded in the dawn.

All hail ! the children's feast day,—
 The Holy Innocents,—
The little martyred princes,
 Who, full of joy intense,

First shed their blood for Jesus,
 In Herod's cruel war ;
And died to save their Saviour
 In Bethlehem of yore.

O feast of many memories !
 So tender, pure and sweet,
When dear St. Joseph's children
 In happy union meet—

When, round their friend and Mother,
 They cluster glad and bright,
Like bees around a blossom,
 Or moths around a light !

If all within this mansion
The golden hours bless—
(As children of the household
In tranquil happiness),

How full of pure affection
The hearts of those who come
With fondest recollection
To visit their old home !

O gentle maids and matrons,
Who, in this blessed place,
In care of holy patrons,
Were reared to God and grace !

Our hearts in glad thanksgiving
Recall the vanished years ;
And o'er the dead and living,
Pour forth our tender tears.

There's snow upon the mountain,
There's winter in the blast ;
Yet our spirits hold communion
With a warm and glowing Past !

Be the years a few or many,
Since we flitted through yon hall—
Since we closed yon door behind us,
With a sad "Farewell to all !"

We have crossed the olden threshold
For a new and earnest life,
For a life of pleasant duties,
Or, perchance, of teasing strife.

But our souls went forth to meet it,
With a firm, unshrinking will :
For the blessing of our MOTHER
Was clinging round us still !

Yes, dearest Sister Gonzaga,
Tho' called from thee to part,
Nor time, nor change, nor absence,
Could blot us from your heart.

Tho' forth we went, in sadness,
With our girlish tears undried,
From the Ark of childhood's gladness,
From friends, the true and tried !

When night was on the waters,
And the winds of sorrow wailed ;
And, like storm-toss'd birds, your daughters,
In trembling anguish, quailed !

Across the waste of billows,
Our souls rejoiced to flee,
As on the dove's white pinions,
Back to home,—to home and *thee* !

O angel of our childhood !
O guardian of our youth !
Whose strictest sway was tempered
By laws of love and truth,—

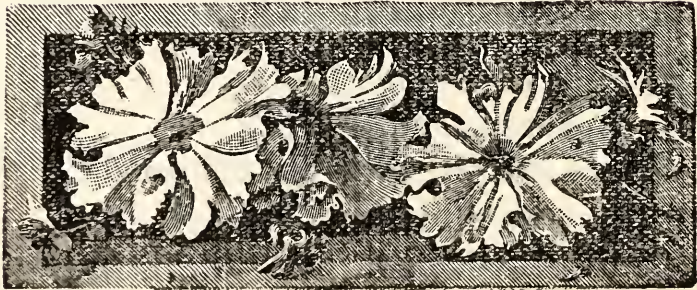
Thou hast done thy noble duty,
Thou hast worked for God alone,
Till thy life's unselfish beauty
Is reflected in our own.

Thou hast blessed us for the future,
Lo! we bless *thee* for the past!
For the present and the future,
From the foremost to the last!

May the golden benediction
Of the Sacred Heart be thine!
With the love and predilection
Of the Virgin Maid Divine!

May St. Vincent be propitious
To thine every prayer and need,
And angelic Aloysius
For thy welfare ever plead!

And, in life and death, dear Sister,
May the great St. Joseph be
Thy guide and sure director
To a glad Eternity!



XXVII.

ROMANCE OF A CHILD OF THE HOUSE. OTHER EDIFYING INCIDENTS.

S may be naturally understood—in so long and eventful an experience as that of our dear Sister Gonzaga (for more than a half-century exercising continuously, as she did, the office of Superioress of one institution)—there must have transpired, from time to time, occurrences and incidents of an unusual character.

The vocations and varied careers of the children, after leaving the Asylum, might occasionally have furnished themes for the pen of the novelist or the poet. A most striking and romantic experience of Sister Gonzaga's day is this, which has been tendered to us by the present Sister-Servant of St. Joseph's Asylum. We shall leave her to tell the little story in her own simple words :

“ During the last year of the Civil War, a very sweet child was brought to the Asylum, at the age of four years, by a friend. Her father having been killed in battle, her mother, then in delicate health, did not survive her husband more than a few weeks—the shock being too

great. The parents of this little one were of highly respectable families, formerly of Baltimore, and in very good circumstances before the breaking out of the Civil War. That struggle reduced them, with many others, to destitution.

"This child was remarkably bright for her age; and Sister Gonzaga, seeing at once that she was of more than ordinary intellect, encouraged her in her aptness to learn. Having gone through the simple course of studies in the Asylum, and reaching the age when the Institution procured for its children other homes, Sister found for her a very suitable one in a good Catholic family which, not having been favored by heaven with a child of its own, gave her the advantages of a higher education.

"She afterwards entered a wealthy family as lady's maid; and having accompanied them abroad, whilst there, became acquainted with a French count. He, in a short time, admiring her polished manners, refined qualities, as well as her thorough religious training, asked her hand in marriage."

"After consulting her spiritual Director, and soliciting the advice of her foster parents, she accepted the offer of the count; and is now living in Paris a model Christian; and there, doing an amount of charity in a quiet way, by drawing many souls to God, and returning, in

a manner, what had been done for her by the Sisters in her childhood. She was not a handsome girl, strictly speaking, but of a refined and intelligent appearance, which did not discredit her high position as a French countess."

"Similar histories of improved condition could be written of hundreds of young girls, who have passed their youth in St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, and who are now living edifying lives in the world; or, of others who, more favored, have heard and answered the Divine Call, and are at present consecrated spouses of Jesus Christ."

The fraternal charity of our dear Sister Gonzaga was not limited in its exercise to the walls of any one of the institutions wherein she labored so acceptably for God and the good of souls. Like the love of the Divine Heart, it overflowed in streams of mercy and tenderness wherever the needs of poor, suffering humanity cried out to it for relief.

For instance, the daughter of an estimable family in Philadelphia, went astray miserably from the path of virtue; and her parents, in the first violent outbreak of their just anger and grief, turned the unhappy girl out of their house. Some months passed away, and, hearing nothing of the poor sinner, remorse, and doubts as to the wisdom of their course began to awaken in the bosoms of the agonized

father and mother. They set themselves to search for their lost child in all possible quarters of the great city.

In vain—in vain. No trace of the missing one could be found. Too late, they realized the awful dangers, the desperate risks, to which, blinded by passion, they had recklessly exposed the hapless creature. Might she not have destroyed her life by some guilty means, or striven to hide her shame in the dark waters of the fast-flowing river?

The uncertainty was maddening. Was it thus that the meek and gentle Jesus had acted towards the sinful Magdalen, and others of her type? If the wretched girl were dead and condemned forever, would not the loss of her immortal soul lie forever at the door of the unforgiving authors of her being?

Finally, in despair and exceeding sorrow, the remorseful parents turned to Sister Gonzaga for consolation—for counsel—for aid.

They could not give that good old mother the slightest clue to the missing girl; but she promised to do her best to find her.

After many efforts, and, we can well believe, many prayers for light and guidance, our dear Sister at last located the abandoned one.

She was a raving maniac in the Insane Ward of the Philadelphia Hospital!

Shame, the cruel stings of conscience, joined with the crushing anguish of her outcast condition, had driven reason from its throne; and it was but a mere mental and physical wreck of their once innocent daughter that Sister Gonzaga was instrumental in restoring to her grief-stricken, and yet, rejoicing parents. "She that was lost, had been found;" and it was, in due time, to be said of her: "she that was dead, had come to life again;" for, by tender care and skilful nursing, the poor wanderer was gradually brought back to her right mind, and, it is to be hoped, to the humble practice of her neglected religion.

Our dear Sister was fully impressed with the truth of her holy Father Vincent's prophetic maxim: "He that has loved the poor during life shall not fear at the approach of death."

At a certain period of her blessed Asylum-life, Sister Gonzaga was remarked to be missing from her place in the Home, an hour or so, every day. This excited the curious interest of her companions, who pressed inquiries upon her. At last, it was discovered that she had been daily attending a poor afflicted creature, lying ill in a little court, near by.

Another suffering one—an old grandmother—came to Sister, one day, and said:

"Mother, dear, you can cure my sore leg—I

know you can! I've had it for twenty years—twenty years—and I've spent lots of money upon doctors."

Smiling, Sister Gonzaga returned:

"Why, Granny, I don't perform *miracles*. Nevertheless, I can give you a salve which we make, and which will, no doubt, relieve you."

The good old soul came every day, after that, for treatment; and Sister, full of the humble charity that is born of the pure love of God, daily washed and dressed the ulcerated limb with her own kind hands.

To the astonishment of every one, the poor creature's leg began to heal; and the long-standing, deep-seated sore of twenty years' standing disappeared, leaving the member perfectly well.

And what do you think Granny did, then?

She hunted up an afflicted companion—some other poor body, worse off than herself—(Oh! the tender charity and neighborliness of many of the suffering poor!)—and led her to the Asylum: there, presenting her to Sister Gonzaga with the jocose introduction:

"See, Mother, I've brought you another one to cure!"

God certainly blessed Sister's simple remedies, and often effected through them quite remarkable cures.

When the smallpox was epidemic in Philadelphia, Sister Gonzaga daily made eighty gallons of medicine, which was given free to all who asked for it; the same remedy being reckoned of like efficacy in scarlet fever and diphtheria.

In the year 1868, the Seminary of the Lazarist Fathers was removed from St. Louis to Germantown, Philadelphia. The zeal and filial devotedness of Sister Gonzaga at once prompted her to write to her most honored Superior in France, Very Rev. Father Etienne, asking his permission to do all that she could for the Seminary in its new home.

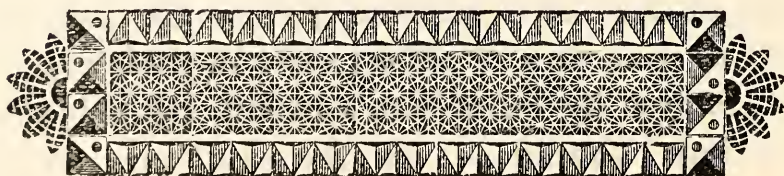
In his reply, the good Superior said to her: "Not only, my dear daughter, do I grant you the permission you crave; but I am delighted that you should do all in your power for our *confrères*. The more you do for them, the more pleasure it will afford me."

Henceforth, it was one of Sister's greatest delights to render service to those special servants of her own beloved Father, St. Vincent. Nothing was any trouble to her in their regard. Her loving devotion was centred (as all such attentions should be) in the sanctuary of the Seminary chapel—in zealous care for the decency and dignity of divine worship in the holy place. All her little store of pocket-money was

expended in replacing old and shabby altar-cloths, corporals, purificators, albs and surplices.

Her work, here, was done so quietly, that few knew of the number and generosity of her offerings; but the good Lazarists can scarcely forget in their prayers one to whom they owe so great a debt of gratitude.

She was devoted to the students of the Seminary. She often visited them, taking out with her a big basket of cakes, candy, and fruit, which she distributed among them, showing her keen enjoyment of the office in every word and gesture. In later years, when sickness or the infirmities of age confined her to her room, those about her frequently heard her say: "How I should love to go to Germantown, to-day, and take something good to my dear boys; but I shall, at least, send it to them!"



XXVIII.

AN IMPERIAL GUEST. SISTER GONZAGA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE.



IN the summer of 1876, during Philadelphia's celebration of the Centennial of American Independence, St. Joseph's Asylum was honored by the presence of an illustrious visitor. This was no less a personage than the Empress of Brazil, who, with her imperial and gifted husband, the late Dom Pedro, was a frequent and interested spectator, that year, of the wonders of our Centennial Exposition, and of all other sights within the limits of the Quaker City.

Simple and unaffected, as was her wont, Sister Gonzaga welcomed the Empress, that summer afternoon, when she entered the hall of the Asylum attended by Donna Josefina da Costa, lady of honor; Admiral de la Mare, Mme. Borges, wife of the Brazilian minister, and Mme. de Barros, wife of the Brazilian Secretary of Legation—the last-named being the converted daughter of the late Hon. Lewis C. Levin, of Philadelphia.

The distinguished guests were conducted to

the large assembling room, where they were received by eight Sisters of Charity and their little orphan charges—one hundred and thirty in number—Sister Gonzaga smilingly presiding.

The children were neatly dressed in uniforms of blue and white percale, and united in singing several of their simple little hymns.

One little girl, not over six years old, surprised the Empress and her party, by reciting an address of welcome in quite creditable French. Others presented her imperial Majesty with flowers, which she received with smiles of gracious sweetness.

Among the selections sung in the chapel, on the occasion, was the *Salve Maria* of Mercadente, which was beautifully rendered by the well-known Philadelphia contralto, Mrs. Caroline McCaffrey School.

Before withdrawing, with her attendants, well pleased with the afternoon's entertainment and edification, the Empress complimented Sister Gonzaga on the gratifying order and neatness, so manifest throughout the institution.

The next important local event commemorated at St. Joseph's Asylum was the Golden Jubilee of Sister Gonzaga's religious vocation. The fiftieth year of her life as a Sister of Charity was completed on the nineteenth of March, 1877; but, as St. Joseph's day, that year, fell in Lent,

the celebration of the Golden Year was postponed until the following April the twelfth.

Indeed, had the matter rested with the dear Jubilarian alone, there would have been no public commemoration of the event, whatever.

Unobtrusiveness was the peculiar note of Sister Gonzaga's character. Ever shrinking from notice, always striving to hide herself and her works, she protested, whenever the question of her Jubilee was discussed, that she would have no celebration of the anniversary in the Asylum.

Much as her Sisters desired to pay her every legitimate tribute of honor and affection, they were all so moved by her imitation of the Great Silent Mother who never sought Her own glory, but was troubled by the praise even of an Archangel, that they promised reluctantly to respect Sister Gonzaga's wishes, and allow the important day to pass without any unusual sign of jubilation.

At that time, the Reverend Father Fitzgerald, of the Congregation of the Mission, was the confessor of the Sisterhood at the Asylum.

When it came to his ears that the Golden Jubilee of so venerable and worthy a Sister, in deference to her humble protests and desires, was to call forth no public celebration, even by her own household, he felt that the hour

had arrived for the exercise of his authority in the case.

"Sister," said he to the dear old Jubilarian, "I, myself, intend to take this matter in hand; and I oblige you to have nothing to say. I promise you, however, that nothing out of the way shall be done. You shall have a crowning like that of our Sisters of Paris—both families of St. Vincent participating therein."

Sister Gonzaga submitted herself, with her usual childlike obedience, to the wishes of her superiors. She knew nothing of the preparations that, at once, began to be made. Sisters and children, bishops, priests, managers, benefactors and friends, all united to make her feast-day a blessed and memorable one. The Asylum at Seventh and Spruce became, those days, as a great celestial bee-hive, wherein each virgin inmate strove to outdo the other in storing honeyed sweetness, and paying homage and reverence to their beloved Queen-bee. A faithful eye-witness of both the private and public celebration of Sister Gonzaga's Golden Jubilee, describes them as follows:

"The 19th of March, the feast of St. Joseph, was the actual anniversary of the day on which, fifty years ago, she entered the religious life. Had it depended on Sister Mary Gonzaga's own wish and choice, no outward token or sign

would have marked the event. But others were interested in that event, as well as herself; and, in the spirit of her whole life, the spirit of obedience and self-sacrifice, she yielded her preference, and submitted to the arrangements made by the Sisters of the House and other friends.

"On the morning of the feast of St. Joseph, Solemn High Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Orphan Asylum, by Rev. R. J. Fitzgerald, C. M., chaplain and confessor of the Sisters, assisted by Rev. P. McHale, C. M., as Deacon, and Rev. J. C. Divine, C. M., as Sub-deacon, after which the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given, and the *Te Deum* was chanted. At the close of these services, floral presentations and appropriate addresses were made by the children to Sister Gonzaga.

"Among the many greetings to Sister Gonzaga, prepared for her Jubilee, was the following, composed by Miss Eleanor C. Donnelly:

"Glad is the favored bride of earth,
And glad her happy spouse,
(Though silver-white may be their heads,
And bent their wrinkled brows):

"Glad are they both, through change and care,
If spared by God to see,
In sacramental union blest,
Their Golden Jubilee.

“ ‘And, rising up, their children, yea,
Their children’s children fair,
May breathe a benediction
On the old and sainted pair.

“ ‘Whilst all the gifts that wealth can buy,
Or fondest love invent,
Are brought to crown the golden feast
With glory and content.

“ ‘Ah, if in seasons such as these
The brides of earth rejoice,
What shall we say of her who hears
A Heavenly Bridegroom’s voice ?

“ ‘Who, for the space of fifty years,
Through shadow and through shine,
Hath followed wheresoe’r He led,
Her spouse, the Lamb divine.

“ ‘Shall not the children of her love,
Her children’s children rise,
To breathe a benediction
On the Bride of Paradise ?

“ ‘Beloved Sister Gonzaga,
No gold or gems have we
To circle with a brilliant crown
Thy Golden Jubilee ;

“ ‘But all that fondest love can ask,
Or purest prayer obtain,
We beg that heaven on thy feast
In bounteous gifts may rain.

- “ ‘The crown of roses on thy brow
Is simple in its bloom ;
And even in its festal trim,
How poor, this little room !
- “ ‘But what is all the wealth of earth
Save vile and empty dross
To her whose Lover, crowned with thorns,
Hangs naked on a cross ?
- “ ‘Behold ! a glorious day shall come,
With changeless splendors bright,
When thou shalt keep thy spousal feast
In halls of quenchless light.
- “ ‘And then, at Blessed Mother’s feet,
The banquet shall be spread ;
And all the happy saints of God
Shall there be gathered.
- “ ‘And dear St. Joseph shall rejoice,
St. Vincent, radiant, sing,
While Gonzaga, angelic youth,
Shall lead thee to the King.
- “ ‘Oh ! may it be thy blissful lot
In *that* glad hour to hear
The welcome of thy royal Spouse,
In tones divine and dear :
- “ ‘Well done, well done, thou faithful one,
Approach thy loving Lord ;
For every cross and sacrifice,
Receive thy rich reward !

“ ‘ For I was hungry and athirst,
And thou didst succor Me ;
And I was naked and forlorn,
And thou didst cover Me.

“ ‘ And I a stranger was—and thou
Didst take Me unto thee ;
And I imprisoned was—and sick,
And thou didst visit Me.

“ ‘ For, as thou didst these things unto
My little ones, the poor,
Thou didst them unto Me—the Lord—
Whose promises are sure.

“ ‘ Therefore, repose in perfect bliss
And from thy labors rest ! ’
Oh good and faithful spouse of Christ,
Be thou forever blest ! ’

“ On Thursday, April the twelfth, 1877,” continues our faithful narrator : “ Solemn High Mass was celebrated, in the chapel of St. Joseph’s Asylum, by Very Rev. James Rolando, Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission, assisted by Rev. R. J. Fitzgerald, C. M., deacon, and Rev. P. Delany, C. M., subdeacon, after which the general and more public festivities commenced.

“ The day was a happy one, indeed, to the good Sisters, to their orphan charges, and to the many friends of the institution. The neat parlors of the substantial residence were filled with

happy faces ; words of joy and mutual congratulations were heard on all sides.

"The numerous presents, some of them of great value, which had been sent to Sister Gonzaga on this occasion, were arranged on a table. Some of these offerings had come from Rome, Paris, Dublin, New Orleans, St. Louis, Niagara Falls, and many distant places, where she is known and loved by former pupils and old friends.

"On a raised platform at one end of the two parlors (thrown into one for this occasion), was a vacant chair. Near this, was a seat for the Most Rev. Archbishop Wood who, attended by several of the clergy of the archdiocese, arrived about 10.30.

"A large number of students from the Seminary and Novitiate at Germantown were also present : as well as a number of ladies, and other friends of the Sisters. After the Archbishop had taken his seat, a procession of the little ones advanced, and, saluting his Grace, retired to the end of the parlor where, also (on stands, one above another), were arranged all the orphans.

"Here, the Sisters entered, and took their seats ; and finally, Sister Mary Gonzaga made her appearance, attended by Sister Mary Anne of Baltimore and Sister Rosina of Detroit. She

was conducted to the seat of honor, and the two Sisters who accompanied her, sat on either hand.

"On one side of the hall were the Rev. Clergy; on the other, the Sisters and friends. A large number of young ladies who had been formerly under the care of the Sisters were grouped at the other end.

"The clergy present were: Very Rev. C. I. H. Carter, V. G., pastor of the Assumption; Very Rev. James Rolando, V. C. M.; Rev. R. J. Fitzgerald, C. M.; Rev. Joseph Alizeri, C. M.; Rev. W. A. Ryan, C. M.; Rev. S. V. Haire, C. M., of St. Vincent's, Germantown; Rev. D. A. Brennan, of the Cathedral; Rev. M. F. Martin, of St. Mary's; Rev. Peter Crane, O. S. A., St. Augustine's; Rev. Antonio Isolero, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi's; Rev. Gerald Coghlan, etc.

"The proceedings commenced by some informal remarks by the Archbishop who, in congratulating the good Sister upon so happy an event, said she had much to thank God for; for without Him, we could do nothing. This reflection was suggested to him by recalling the remark made to himself by a good and pious priest, who, when he was shown by the Bishop the Cathedral which he had erected, instead of saying: 'You have done wonders; you have been very successful,' said, 'Well, Bishop, you have much to thank God for.'

“The Archbishop then read the request made to the Holy Father for his special blessing on the occasion; and his reply, granting the request, with the Apostolic Benediction, ‘as the crown of a lifetime entirely spent in good and charitable works.’

“A beautiful incident now took place. A dove, bearing a gilt crown, was let down from the ceiling, and the crown rested on the head of Sister Mary Gonzaga. The good Sister seemed overwhelmed at being the object of such a demonstration of honor, her humility shrinking from honors as much as others’ pride seeks them.

“A beautiful song and chorus was sung, at the same moment, by the children. It was as follows :

“‘CORONATION SONG.

“‘ In harmonious concert blending
With the Angels’ song of love,
Childhood’s grateful prayer ascending
To the Mercy seat above,
Orphan hands and hearts are lifted
Choicest favors to implore,
And a thousand voices echo :
‘ Crown the Mother of the Poor !’

Chorus.

“ Weave a chaplet for our Mother,
Ever watchful, ever mild ;
Fifty years have found her faithful
To the lonely orphan child !

“ From the shed of want and sorrow,
Murmur'd blessings soft ascend :
' God reward thy tender pity,
Angels guard thee, generous friend !'
And in meek and plaintive accents,
Comes the weary sufferer's cry :
' Blessings on thee, Vincent's daughter,
Thou hast taught us how to die.'

Chorus.

“ Crown the friend whose fond devotion
Strove to dry each mourner's tear ;
Fifty years have ever found her
Faithful to her Master dear.

“ In the chorus of sweet praises,
Whence, the strains now rising free ?
Whence, the tones so fraught with feeling,
Rich with love's own melody ?
'Tis a tribute of affection,
Pure and holy in its birth,
Breath'd from hearts by bonds united,
Stronger than the bonds of earth:

Chorus.

“ Crown the one who gently ruleth
By the law of Charity !
Fifty years have found her faithful
To each claim of sympathy.'

“ ‘ Now, the Mistress of high Heaven,
Empress of the virgin band,
Turneth to the winged seraphs
That obey her least command :
‘ Thro’ the trackless fields of ether,
Haste, a Mother’s blessings bear,
To the child who made my glory,
Fifty years, her zealous care.’

Chorus.

“ ‘ Crown the favored child of Mary,
Sing the wonders she hath done,
Since her heart was consecrated
To the Mother and the Son.

“ ‘ And that God, at whose blest summons
Youth’s bright hopes were cast away ;
He to whom her faith was plighted
On the happy nuptial day—
Oh ! with what divine complaisance
He beholds her constancy !
Oh ! how sweetly He commendeth
Her long-proved fidelity !

Chorus.

“ ‘ Crown then, crown with highest honor,
Her whom Jesus makes his bride ;
Oh ! how noble is her title—
Chosen of the crucified !’

“ ‘ The Very Rev. James Rolando, V. C. M.,
then made an address in his capacity of Visitor
of the Congregation. It brought tears to many

eyes as he referred in touching tones to the great reward which awaited Sister Gonzaga in heaven, when an eternal and incorruptible crown, of which the present temporary one was but the type, would await her; this crown would never fade, but would grow brighter through all the ages of eternity. On behalf of the whole Congregation, he joined in the good wishes proper to this happy day.

“ One of the Sisters next read a tribute from the Sisterhood, in a clear, distinct voice. It told in beautiful language, how :

“ ‘ A maiden mild and modest,
Her heart with love aglow,
Before God’s holy altar, knelt,
Full fifty years ago.’ ”

“ How she heard a divine voice, which sweetly invited her to give to Him her ‘ undivided heart,’ if she would leave her family, and her friends, and hate her very life; if she would consider all worldly love as nothing to the carriage of the Cross. This maiden answered meekly, that she would follow whithersoever her Divine Lord went; and He told her that she should be a Sister of Charity, a child of St. Vincent, and particularly, that she should feed His little lambs. To this work, accordingly, she applies herself:

“ ‘Nor slight her task ; in silence lies,
The pain revealed to none,
The burden of the sacrifice,
Her little martyrdom.

“ ‘To cherish Christ’s loved little ones
Before their Master’s face ;
Of father, mother, sisters—all,
To fitly fill the place.

“ ‘And thus, in pain and toil and care,
Distress, anxiety,
She labors ’mongst God’s little ones
For half a century.’

“ ‘And who was this maiden, this devoted mother? Who, but SISTER MARY GONZAGA, who now, when the evening shadows prevailed, was still at her post?’

“At the conclusion of the Sister’s address, she advanced to Sister Mary Gonzaga, and, saluting her, returned to her place.

“The next event was the reading of a tribute from the Rev. Lazarist Fathers of Germantown, by Rev. P. McHale. This address was also exceedingly beautiful and touching. Referring to the tributes already paid by the Archbishop, by the Visitor, and by the Sisters, it claimed that St. Vincent’s spirit constrained them, ‘the younger portion of that double family, which justly claims for its founder and father the

Apostle of Charity, St. Vincent,' to unite likewise in its expression of joy on this happy occasion. 'Not to speak,' continued the address, 'of those hidden deeds which have escaped the human eye, but which angels have registered for the great account, the labors undertaken at the Master's call, and ever performed under that Master's eye, the sweet perfume of charity that breathed around them, the life of self-sacrifice which necessarily accompanied their due performance, all demand a recognition from us, to-day.'

"The address from the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels, Niagara, was read by Mr. Grace. It was signed by Revs. R. E. V. Rice, P. V. Kavanagh, T. A. Shaw, Martin Dwyer, M. Cavanagh, J. Edw. Lefevre, J. V. Talley, M. J. Kircher, P. Carroll, B. V. Driscoll, E. M. V. Hopkins, Ch. J. Eckles, T. W. Kearney, all of the Congregation of the Mission. It was beautifully expressed, and conveyed in appropriate language the sentiments of respect and veneration which they felt for her who was 'one among a thousand even of the Daughters of Charity,' and who had, for so long a period, labored for the little ones of Christ.

"A beautiful song, *Fifty Years, To-Day*, with chorus, was then sung with remarkable accuracy and harmony by the pupils.

“It was followed by an address, read by Sister Kostka, of Wilmington, entitled a ‘*Greeting from Long Ago.*’ It referred in a humorous manner, to many incidents in the experience of Sister Gonzaga; and its effect was to blend laughter with the tears that had been shed before, so that many faces were like April mornings, ‘half smiles, half tears.’

“The next event on the programme was the presentation of some beautiful flowers, accompanied with an address from the Children of Mary, spoken by Miss Kate Higgins. The address referred, in very appropriate terms, to the simple yet lovely flowers, ‘fit emblems of the many virtues that she (Sister G.) had ever endeavored to instil into their hearts,’ and finished with a wish, that the Children of Mary would ever practise them.

“At the conclusion of this address, a number of young ladies, former pupils of the asylum, advanced, each with a lovely floral offering, in the shape of crosses, harps, etc., and presented them to Sister Gonzaga. We have seldom seen so beautiful a collection of flowers, as was tendered on this occasion.

“Two sweet little girls, prettily dressed, and very small, then came forward, and touched the hearts of all present by a simple ‘*Dialogue,*’ in which they expressed their love for Sister Gonzaga, and their desire to honor her feast.

"An extremely merry strain was now heard, as '*Sister Gonzaga's Ball*' was given in chorus by the pupils. It was very enlivening, and caused great amusement.

"Three little misses then came forward, and presented a magnificent cake, accompanied by another address, in which reference was made to the various ingredients, and recalled the old saying, that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' After '*Vive la Mere*' had been sung in chorus, fruit and candies were presented by some of the very youngest children, one little tot being lifted up to kiss the Sister; as all the children saluted her, after their addresses.

"'*Tis Heaven*' was sung; more flowers being presented by other tiny orphans. There was also a '*Greeting from Reading*,' read by a little girl from that house.

"'*Auld Lang Syne*' was a chorus by the students; and then, all present went to the chapel, where the Archbishop, assisted by Father Rolando, gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, after which the *Te Deum* was sung, and the proceedings terminated.

"A very pleasant and a very pretty sight was that to be seen at 1 o'clock in the children's dining-room. Over a hundred little ones, rosy, healthy-looking, and with excellent appetites and spirits, partook of their dinner; and under

their strict attention, all the good things provided for them very speedily disappeared.

"The visitors, likewise, at a later hour, partook of the Sisters' hospitality, which was furnished with unsparing liberality.

"That Sister Mary Gonzaga may long live in peace and health; and that she may be crowned with the choicest blessings of Heaven, as she already is with the love and esteem of all who know her, is the prayer of all her friends."

"What," asked an able journalist of that day, commenting on Sister's Jubilee, "what has occasioned this assembly at the old Asylum at Seventh and Spruce streets? Nothing of any importance in the estimation of the world. It is nothing more than the fiftieth anniversary of the admission into the Order of the Sisters of Charity of one who, when received, had scarcely passed out of her girlish years, and now lacks five years of three score and ten. . . .

"What is the meaning of this celebration? The world celebrates the anniversaries of emperors, kings, conquerors, statesmen, poets, great engineers, and millionaires. The Sister, whose fiftieth anniversary of her reception into the religious Order to which she belongs, has just been celebrated,—is none of these. Of wealth, she has none. Of worldly possessions, little more than the coarse gray habit which she wears.

“She is simply a plain, unassuming woman, a Sister of Charity who, for fifty years, has led a quiet, unostentatious, but devout and active life, industriously laboring to do good to others. And yet, she has accomplished more than if she had built a thousand miles of railway, or piled up the fortunes of an Astor, a Vanderbilt or a Stewart. They are almost forgotten already. *Her* deeds will follow after her in the descendants of the orphans she has watched over, preserved from suffering and from wickedness, and trained to virtue. Who is able to compute the sum of the results, direct and indirect, that have accrued and are still continuing to accrue, from a life of fifty years, spent, day by day, in doing the work of a Sister of Charity?

“A golden crown was, yesterday, placed upon her head: but that crown was only typical of another crown, never fading, ever enduring, which, St. Paul tells us, awaits all who are faithful unto the end. A greater than St. Paul, even our Divine Lord Himself, has declared: that those who in His name feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick, the suffering and poor, shall enter into His joy, and share His everlasting glory in the mansions of His Father’s House in Heaven.

“What is there in a life devoted to the pursuits of the world that can compare with this?

What, in the blood-stained laurels of an earthly conqueror? What, in the honors nations award to statesmen and rulers?

“ ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; sick, and you visited Me. . . . As long as you did it to these, My least brethren, you did it to Me.’

“This blessing is what the Sisters of Charity labor to gain; and this is of more account than all the world has to give, or to withhold.”

We cannot more appropriately close this chapter on Sister Gonzaga's Golden Jubilee, than by here giving our readers an opportunity to peruse the letters that follow:



“EMMITSBURG, MD.,

“ST. JOSEPH'S, February, 1878.

“MY VERY DEAR SISTERS:

“The grace of our Lord be with us for ever!

“The original of the subjoined letter was sent to our dear Sister Gonzaga Grace, and forwarded by her to us.

“Saturday, March 23d, has been appointed as the day on which we will make the Communion, to which our late Holy Father was pleased to attach the Plenary Indulgence.

“Very affectionately yours,

“SISTER SUPERIOR.”

[Sister Blenkinsop, at that date, was the revered Sister Visitatrix of the Sisters of Charity, and local Superioress at Emmitsburg. Her brothers were the late Rev. William Blenkinsop, of the Boston archdiocese, and the late Rev. Peter Blenkinsop, S. J., well known to Philadelphians as Rector, for many years, of old St. Joseph's Church, Willing's Alley, where he slept in Christ, some years since.]

“ROME, ITALY, Jan. 28, 1878.

“MY DEAR MRS. REYNOLDS,*

“I was at the Vatican, this morning, where I had the happiness and consolation to receive from our revered Holy Father, his apostolic benediction for the hour of death for your good friend, Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace.

“And he was further graciously pleased to grant a *special* Plenary Indulgence to her, to her Reverend Mother and her entire Community, on their approaching the Holy Communion on any day which the Reverend Mother may select for that purpose; and this, in memory and thanksgiving to God for the golden jubilee of Sister M. Gonzaga.

“Please give her my sincere congratulations.

“Yours sincerely in Christ,

“F. KIRBY.”

*Mrs. Reynolds was, for years, a prominent member of the band of pious ladies (representatives of the first families of Philadelphia), who were devoted to the interests of St. Joseph's Asylum. She was a woman of elegant and distinguished presence; and Sister Gonzaga often said that she bore a striking resemblance to her beloved foster-mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Michel Heuisler.

XXIX.

LAST ILLNESS OF SISTER MARY JOHN. SKETCH OF HER LIFE.

AVORED by God from her early youth," writes our good convent-chronicler: "Sister Gonzaga, as she advanced in age, lost nothing of her sweetness and amiability, but seemed to grow dearer to those who loved and venerated her. She was admirably adapted by experience and sound judgment to the training of young Sisters. I shall always thank God for sending me to her. (I had just attained my fourth year of vocation.) Nothing in us escaped her vigilant notice. She instilled into us a love of religious Poverty, often admonishing us how careful we should be of the goods of the Community, and of the poor. She would never allow anything to be wasted, no matter how trivial, were it only a *match*.

"Sister generally read the holy Rules to us herself, always indicating to us, with maternal candor, the points wherein we had failed. If this might occasion a momentary dismay or depression, she was prompt with cheering words of high encouragement, representing to us the marvel-

ous, everlasting reward which our Lord held in store for the fidelity of His devoted servants."

Among the senior Sisters of the Asylum, at that time, was one especially dear to the heart of Mother Gonzaga—one who had been her constant companion for more than half a century—the sympathetic sharer of all her joys and sorrows, from youth to advanced age.

We have before mentioned, in this Memoir, the name of SISTER MARY JOHN, one of the most perfect models of religious virtue that ever edified a community.

A special biography would be needed to do full justice to the humble, charitable, laborious career of this hidden servant of God—for "hidden," indeed, was her long, holy life, "in Christ her Lord." All her glory, her beauty, like the King's daughter's "was within."

Whilst Sister Gonzaga bore openly in her exterior the impress of the noble soul within her; whilst her firm, benign countenance, with its high forehead, kindly mouth and clear eyes (which not even age could dim), all betokened the graciousness and good breeding, the well-trained and well-balanced mind of a superior woman, Sister Mary John's appearance, like that of a wooden casket enshrining a precious and exquisite pearl, displayed naught save what was of the homely and the ordinary.

Her face was plain, thin, and of rather a harsh and rigid type of asceticism; her manners simple, somewhat brusque, and singularly stamped with the seal of a divine self-effacement.

She died at St. Joseph's Asylum on the thirteenth of September, 1882, being then past the age of seventy-four years; and having celebrated, some time previous, the Golden Jubilee of her religious vows.

Sister Gonzaga never fully recovered from the effects of her death—from the loss of her faithful, sympathetic, continual companionship. Mother Seton, of blessed memory, was accustomed to say of a favorite Sister (a first companion), that if any one ever had a wish to find a piece of herself it might be found in her dear Sister Clossy. The half of Sister Gonzaga's self, in like manner, might have been sought and found in her beloved Sister Mary John.

Regarding this lowly-spirited daughter of St. Vincent—since, as the poet says:

“—It is enough
To catch one glimpse of heaven's blue,
For us to know the beauty of the sky,
It is enough to tell a little part
Of her most holy life, that you may know
The hidden grace and splendor of the whole.”

Years after our dear Sister Gonzaga's death, there was found in her private desk, the subjoined sketch of Sister Mary John, evidently prepared, not long after the latter's demise, for presentation to the Sister Visitatrix of the Order at Emmitsburg.

As no one was better fitted to become the biographer of the holy deceased, than one who had been her superior and lifelong companion, in the closest and most intimate contact of religious life, under a common roof—we are happy in being able to here present to our readers the true story of Sister Mary John's life and death, narrated in Sister Gonzaga's own words :

“Having lived over fifty-one years with our dear Sister Mary John, it is my special privilege to give you a little sketch of her life and virtues.

“She was born on the second of December, 1808, in Baden Baden, where she remained with her virtuous parents until about the age of six years, when they emigrated to this country with three other children. Her mother died soon after they arrived in Philadelphia, and her father removed, with the children, to Carlisle, Penna.

“In her twenty-first year, Rose Yelly (for such was her baptismal name), felt an earnest

desire of consecrating herself to God, to serve the poor. She made application to our good Mother Rose (White), and was admitted on the ninth of November, 1829. Having spent several months at the Mother-House, she was sent on her first mission to St. Joseph's Asylum, Philadelphia, on the twenty-seventh of July, 1831, making her holy Vows there on the feast of the Purification, 1832.

"Shortly after arriving among us, the office of housekeeping was assigned her. Well and faithfully did she discharge this duty, sparing neither pains nor labor to provide an abundance of good, comfortable food for the dear orphans, and to serve them herself. If any among them were delicate, or failed to eat their meals, it was our dear Sister's delight to give them something extra, both at the table and between meals. She never tired waiting on them all, and could not be induced to eat her own meals until they (her charges) had been served, over and over again.

"The children, who had grown up and left the Asylum, were also the objects of her care. On Sundays, many of them spent the evening together at the Asylum. Sister loved to talk to them about their work, ask where they boarded, if they had comfortable meals, lodging, etc.—would advise them to take care of their

earnings and put them in the bank, that they might not be straitened, in case their work should be slack. Sometimes, she would ask me: 'May I give them a cup of tea? They are going to church from here, and won't have any supper.'

"Our dear Sister had a heart like our blessed Father's (St. Vincent). She was touched with the miseries of every one; rich and poor shared her sympathy. The poor loved to come to her to tell their troubles, and to ask advice. They never left her without feeling comforted, or receiving some little article for themselves or children. She never was better pleased than when some wealthy persons would send clothing or money to her for the poor. She would put them up in parcels, saying: 'This is for such a poor man; these flannels are for such a one with the rheumatism; that, for Mrs. N's baby. This overcoat is for N——; that dress, for his wife. Poor souls! they have so much sickness they cannot procure clothing.'

"A few days before her death, a poor man whom she had assisted—with his wife and child—in several spells of illness, begged to see her. Our dear Sister, who was then expecting to receive some clothing from a lady, turned to one of the Sisters, and said: 'Be sure to give him something nice when Mrs.—— sends the basket!'

The poor man took Sister's hand, and kneeling down, kissed it.

"One day, another *protégée* came in, with a half-starved baby, almost naked. Sister came to me with tears in her eyes, saying she had some little baby clothes. Might she give them to the poor woman, and a bottle of milk for the baby?

"After she had been to market, she would say (concerning certain of the market-people): 'Won't you give me something for such a one? She has such a bad cold.' Or, 'Such a one hasn't anything in that cold market to keep him warm. May I try to get some flannels, etc., for them?'

"No young Sister could be more exact than our dear Sister in asking permissions. If anything were given her for herself, her first thought was: Who needs such a thing? Then: 'May I give this to the poor? N—— has no shoes, or skirt, etc.'

"On the occasion of her *Cinquartaine*, several friends of the house gave her considerable sums of money. 'Now,' she said, 'I will have something for the poor!'

"She would come as humbly and simply as a child, and ask: 'Will you give me a little of my money?' On handing her what she wanted, she would say: 'Now, may I do as I like with this for the poor?'

“I do not think she ever spent a cent of it for herself—all went to the relief of her dear poor, except a portion that I told her was to be for Masses. I could not find words, my dear Mother, to express to you her submission and obedience. Her docility was that of a child. Although endowed with superior abilities, she never permitted herself to make a reply when I said I wished a thing done. When I would ask her advice, she answered: ‘You know best.’

“Sometimes, I have spoken hastily, and said she ought not to have done such or such things. She never excused herself, much less, gave any reason for what she did. I have often felt so confused at her humble submission, that I wished I had not found fault with her.

“Every one admired our dear Sister Mary John for her simplicity. There was no guile in her; her lips spoke the sentiments of her heart. A lady said to me, some months ago: ‘What a lovely person Sister Mary John is! She is my ideal of a perfect religious. Could you ever detect a fault in her? She seems to me all simplicity and charity.’

“She always shrank from the esteem and applause of the world—thinking that every one knew more, and could do better than herself; but after her death, all were loud in her praise, and she received more honor and veneration from the public than all the great ones.



SISTER MARY JOHN.

"Such a funeral as hers has not been in Philadelphia for many years. Thousands visited the chapel during the two days her precious remains were exposed there. Rich and poor, great and small, thought it an honor to kiss those venerable hands that had labored so long in the service of God's poor little ones. No one would have thought they had ever done any work; they were as white and flexible as wax."

In this connection (if we may be permitted to interrupt for a space, the edifying narrative of Sister Gonzaga), we cannot refrain from relating an incident of the last days of Sister Mary John, which is as touching and sublime in its evidence of her wonderful self-depreciation, as are some of the occurrences recorded of Brother Juniper in the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*.

As the aged Sister began to pass painfully into the Valley of the Shadow, her characteristic humility took alarm, and filled her with fears of the approaching judgment. After those blessed seventy years and more, teeming with prayers, penances, and works of mercy and self-sacrifice, Sister Mary John lamented that she had "*nothing to offer*" her Master, when she should appear before His face. One of the attending Sisters, hearing the humble complaint, pointed to the swollen, toil-hardened hands of the dying Sister, and answered her with these significant words:

“Only show Him your hands, dear Sister, and He will be satisfied!”

This circumstance suggested the following poem which was, later, published and distributed as a memorial of the hidden saint of God. It was entitled:

“PLEADING HANDS.” *

“Show Him your hands, dear Sister,
As you stand at the Bar Supreme;
Though the searching lights of the Judgment
About you, startled, stream—

“Stretch forth your toil-worn fingers,
By generous service scarr’d;
They are whiter and sweeter than lilies,
Those roughened hands, and hard.

“For they, to the dear Lord Jesus,
Will breathe the tale of the past;
Will tell of the heavenly treasures
By ceaseless toil amass’d.

“The care for the helpless orphan,
The zeal for the suff’ring poor;
The deeds of a life devoted,
Unselfish, brave, and pure!

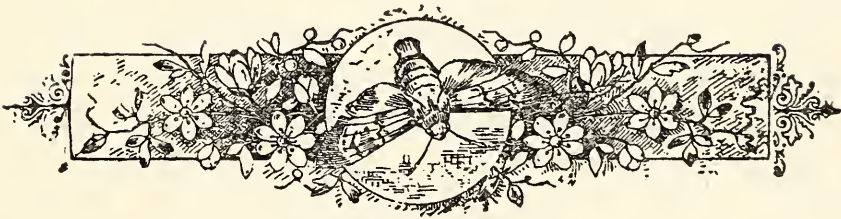
“A hero’s courage in crosses,
A woman’s tenderness;
A sympathy ’mid all losses,
To cheer, to comfort, to bless—

* From *Children of the Golden Sheaf*, by Eleanor C. Donnelly.

“ This is the tale of those fingers,
Those trembling hands, and old,
Fairer and sweeter than lilies,
Rarer than gems and gold !

“ For these are the fadeless lilies,
The angels love to cull ;
And, of incorruptible gold and gems,
Those dear old hands are full.

“ And the Master says (as He folds them
To His heart)—‘ Thrice blessed be !
For all that ye did to My little ones,
Ye surely did to Me ! ’ ”



XXX.

SISTER MARY JOHN'S DEATH AND BURIAL. GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE HOUSE.

“N the seventh of September, 1882,” continues Sister Gonzaga’s chronicle, “our dear Sister received Extreme Unction with sentiments of great piety and devotion. Just the moment before our good Father Rolando was about to anoint her, she joined her hands, begging pardon aloud for all the pain and bad example she had ever given any of the Sisters. The next morning—the feast of the Nativity of our Blessed Mother—she received the Holy Viaticum. From that time, she kept perfectly recollected, united interiorly to her Divine Spouse, in Whose bosom, she would repose for all eternity.

“About 8.30 o’clock, on the evening of the twelfth, death laid its icy hand on our beloved Sister. She became restless, wishing to be turned, etc.,—but said she did not feel worse.

“Finding a change in her, two of us remained near her, suggesting aspirations, and wetting her lips. She asked several times: ‘Am I dying?’ Then, said: ‘But I do not know

what death is!’ We said to her: ‘But you are resigned to God’s will.’ ‘Yes,’ (she returned): ‘yes, I am resigned, I am resigned—God’s will!’

“Fearing she might lose consciousness, if I delayed longer, I said: ‘Won’t you, my dear Sister, when you get to Heaven, beg God to bless this Asylum, and all connected with it—all the Sisters and children in it—all who will ever be in it—all the good works that may be done in it—all the Managers, friends, and benefactors of the House, our Superiors, and the two families of St. Vincent of this Province, especially; and beg it through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, and the intercession of St. Vincent, whose daughter you have been for so many years?’

“‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘when I get to Heaven.’

“Several times she asked: ‘Am I in my agony?’ Seeing she was, I said, with a voice broken by sobs: ‘I think, my dear Sister, our Lord will soon call you to Himself, to be forever with Him in Heaven!’ ‘Oh!’ she answered, checking me, ‘If I get there!’

“Recommending confidence in the merits of our Divine Saviour, the intercession of our Blessed Mother, our holy Father (Vincent), her patron (St. John), she remained quite composed and conscious to the last.

“As we finished the prayers for the agonizing, she departed out of this world, as gently as if she were only in a sweet sleep, at three o'clock in the morning of the thirteenth of September.

“Her countenance remained as unchanged even in the coffin; and when it was about to be closed, police officers were stationed outside to keep out the crowd. Every one was anxious to take a last look at her.

“In passing through the (Asylum) hall, it was heartrending to hear the cries and sobs of the people, who mourned her as their friend and comforter. She always had a kind word for all that came to her. She rejoiced with the happy, and wept with those in trouble.

“Her funeral (at St. Mary's Church), was attended by rich and poor. The first gentlemen and ladies of the city walked in the procession with the Sisters and the Orphans. A large number of these (last), some of them mothers and grandmothers, followed—all wearing their Medals and blue ribbons.

“A Solemn Requiem was sung by our venerable Father Rolando, attended by several Fathers from St. Vincent's Seminary (Germantown). The sermon was preached by Rev. Thomas W. Power, formerly assistant at our parish church. He said he deemed it an honor to speak over one whom he had known so long,

and looked upon as a saint. He took for his text: '*Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart;*' and he said: 'She (Sister Mary John) had faithfully complied with the invitation of our Divine Saviour. Her life was hidden from men, but great and beautiful in the sight of God. What he had witnessed at her coffin,' he added, reminded him of what Saint Paul witnessed near the remains of Dorcas, 'where the poor kissed the hands, and blessed the name of their benefactress and friend.'

"They touched our dear Sister with their beads, medals, and pictures, carrying off flowers that had been laid around her by her loving children's hands.

"Even after she was put in the Vault, grown persons asked for flowers off her coffin; and begged it might be opened to let them see her once more.

"The undertaker could not refuse their request, and took off the lid to satisfy them.

"Our dear Sister, we feel convinced, already enjoys the happiness of heaven, as the reward of her long and faithful service of the poor; but her departure has left a deep void in our midst. But we will strive, by the imitation of her virtues, to merit, like her, the grace of final perseverance and an eternity of glory.

"Excuse, my dear Mother, if you please, my

long delay in sending you these notes, but my poor heart is so overpowered with grief, that I cannot write; and if I were able to say all the good that I know of her, it would fill a book of itself.

“ Please pray for your devoted child,

“ SISTER MARY GONZAGA.”

Four years had elapsed since the death of the venerated Sister Mary John; and the time had now come for the celebration of a peculiarly glad and glorious event in the history of the old Asylum.

On October the twenty-fourth, 1886, the Orphanage completed the fiftieth year of its successful establishment at Seventh and Spruce streets, Philadelphia. The anniversary occurring on a Sunday (a day, which had its disadvantages for many of the ecclesiastics who desired to attend), the celebration was deferred until the following day.

A correspondent of the *Philadelphia Catholic Standard*, of that date, thus circumstantially describes the event :

“ On Monday, October 25th, St. Joseph’s Orphan Asylum, at Seventh and Spruce streets, commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment (at its present site). The old house was blessed on the feast of St. Raphael, October

24, 1836, by the (then) Rev. Peter Richard Kenrick, of St. Mary's, who, five years later, was consecrated Coadjutor to Rt. Rev. Bishop Rosati, of St. Louis, and is now the Most Rev. Archbishop of that See.

“By a happy coincidence, His Grace, our own Most Rev. Archbishop Ryan, the bosom friend and former Coadjutor of the venerable Archbishop of St. Louis, presided on Monday at the Golden Jubilee of St. Joseph's Asylum. His Grace is President of the Asylum Board of Directors, which consists of Hon. ex-Judge James Campbell (Postmaster-General of the United States, under President Buchanan), Hon. John M. Campbell (Collector of the Port, of Philadelphia), Henry Preaut, Esq., Dr. William V. Keating, Mr. Alfred Gibson, Dr. Robert Nebinger, Henry T. Coleman, Esq., together with Messrs. Philip Fitzpatrick and Philip Barry, Mr. Woods, and Mr. William Willcox. These gentlemen were all present, with the exception of Dr. Nebinger and Mr. Preaut. Rev. Elias Lebreton, chaplain of the institution; Very Rev. Dr. Stanton, O. S. A., of St. Augustine's; Rev. Fathers McGill and Sullivan, C. M., of Germantown; Fathers Brennan, Isoleri, McElhone, Hiltermann, and other prominent visitors, clerical and lay, were in attendance. Rev. Dr. Horstmann was prevented from being present by illness.

“The entertainment was of a highly interesting character. The first part consisted of music and recitations by present and former pupils of the House. The second, of some vocal and instrumental selections by the Misses Donnelly, Miss Sauvan, Madame Poissat, Professor Louis Jossin, and Father Lebreton; followed by a prominent feature of the occasion, the subjoined *Golden Jubilee Ode*, composed by Miss Eleanor C. Donnelly, and feelingly recited by one of the older scholars:

I.

“Fifty golden years ago,
In the ripe October's glow,
Ere the Vesper-chimes had ceased
On the angel Raphael's feast—
Loving hearts long passed away,
Loving hands long turned to clay,
Laid the fair foundation stone
Of St. Joseph's altar-throne,
And, within *this* blest abode,
First began the work of God.

II.

“Here, the ancient Board assembled,
(Courteous men of manners quaint):
Here, with pious rev'rence trembled,
When, amid them, like a saint,—

(Gracious presence, fair and good),
Dear, distinguished KENRICK stood ;
Full of faith, and love, and hope,
Vested in his shining cope,
Shedding blessings, all divine,
On St. Joseph's favored shrine.

III.

“ ‘ While, with meek and dove-like mien,
Placid form and face serene,
From their sunny Southern sphere,
Came the old-time Sisters here—
Greeting at St. Vincent's tryst,
All the helpless ones of Christ,
And, beneath his roof-tree low,
Housing them from want and woe.

IV.

“ ‘ Glad and sweet, their festal lay
On the great Archangel's day,
Claiming, for their patron bright,
God's fair minister of might ;
Meekest of the mystic Seven,
Raphael, pilgrim-guide to heaven,
Healer of the ills and woes
Every child of Adam knows—
'Twas with *him*, they joyed to share
Joseph's love and Vincent's care ;
And, beside him, onward press'd
To the City of the Blest !

V.

“Where are now those olden friends,
 Toilers for such glorious ends?
 —Like a star by dawn decreas’d,
 Fades afar their ancient feast.
 Memories of *Auld Lang Syne*
 Vanish in the noonday’s shine;
 And beneath the coffin-lid,
 Many a golden dream lies hid.
 —Relics of a hallowed past,
 Into ashes crumbling fast,
 Members of the old-time Board
 Long have slumbered in the Lord—
 Leaving still their reverend chief
 (Crown’d with years and virtues’ yield),
 Standing, like a ripened sheaf,
 In the Master’s harvest-field.
 Prince of Mother Church—ordained
 To her highest ministry,
 Noble Kenrick long hath reigned
 O’er St. Louis’ distant See;
 While, beside the Living Waters,
 All the ancient Sisters stray.
 Of St. Vincent’s early daughters,
 Only *one* survives to-day!

VI.

“Only *one*—ye know her well;
 Let the poor her title tell!
 SISTER-SERVANT!—all the fame
 That she craves is in that name.

Sister-Servant, kind and good,
Of a tender orphan-brood ;
Sister-Servant of the lowly,
Of the suff'ring, meek, and holy—
Last of all her mates alive,
Dear queen-bee of Joseph's hive!
God be praised! she lives to see
Love's grand Golden Jubilee !

VII.

“SISTER GONZAGA, the tried
Friend of all who here abide—
Half a century, and more,
She hath labored for the poor ;
And, to-day, in their sweet stead,
In the name of Christ their Head,
With her Sisters, glad she meets you,
With her Sisters, glad she greets you,
Thanks you, with a swelling heart,
For the brave and noble part
Ye have borne, these many years,
In her life of cares and fears.

VIII.

“Oh ! may God reward your zeal,
Generous hearts, as true as steel !
May the blessings of the poor
On you fall, like dewdrops pure,
In your souls, refreshing fair
Every flower of faith and prayer !

And, as Raphael, endless joy
Wished Tobias and his boy—
Wished them, with sublime increase,
Everlasting joy and peace—
So, may bliss and peace eternal
Fill your hearts with joys supernal,
Till, at last, beyond the skies,
Crown'd with heavenly charity,
Ye may keep in Paradise,
God's eternal Jubilee !'

"After its recitation, the Archbishop made some happy remarks upon the *Ode*, and the events which it recorded.

"'The feast of reason, and the flow of soul' was then supplemented by a superb collation, provided for the guests and pupils, by the considerate generosity of Messrs. Gibson, Green, and other kind friends of the institution; and his Grace withdrew with his attendants during the singing of a pathetic chorus, entitled '*Fifty Years Ago.*'"



XXXI.

SISTER GONZAGA'S RECALL TO EMMITSBURG. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.



OUR beloved Sister had now rounded out, in a remarkable career of activity and usefulness, the green old age of three-score-ten and five blessed years. She was still presiding as Sister-Servant of St. Joseph's Asylum—still, despite the burden of years and infirmities, conscientiously discharging all the duties of her responsible position to Sisters and children alike.

At this time, it began to seem good to her Superiors that the venerable religious should be relieved of her heavy charge—that she should return to St. Joseph's Valley, and repose at the Mother House for the remainder of her mortal days.

She had taken part in the foundation of the House at Seventh and Spruce; she had lived to see and preside at its Golden Jubilee.

Now, the hour had come for her to withdraw from active duty, and share the peaceful society of so many of her venerable *consœurs*, who had

preceded her into the retirement of Emmitsburg.

The *fiat* fell like a thunderbolt upon St. Joseph's Asylum.

Sister Gonzaga to depart forever from her ancient home? Grief and consternation followed, like black-browed phantoms, upon the heels of the distressing mandate.

All had deemed the death of Sister Mary John the worst calamity that could have befallen our dear old Sister in this vale of tears. But there was still to come this grander, surer test of her patience, her religious virtue. There yet remained the living death of *Obedience*, which lies in wait at every turn and corner of convent-life, ready to prove the gold of the true religious, whether she be old as the everlasting hills, or young and tender as the first blossoms of their spring violets.

It may not bear—that other Death—the cruel scythe of the fell Destroyer, who

“—reaps the bearded grass at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between,”—

but its two-edged sword divideth its voluntary victim from much that is dearer than life; and it carries with it, ever, the hour-glass of its skeleton Brother, to reckon the slowly-

running sands of weeks, months, years of self-annihilation and long-continued submission to the will of superiors.

Sister Gonzaga was a true, a perfect religious. She made no murmur, she uttered no complaint; but bowed in silent, unprotesting obedience to the decree of those who represented to her our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

To say that she did not suffer in this heroic exercise of her holy vow—and suffer excruciatingly—would be to be false to her—false to those she loved at her dear Asylum—false to our good readers themselves.

She was a woman of strong and deep affections. The dear old heart that felt so sensitively the wrench from the home and the tender associations of half a century, was the same loving one that had prompted her to write to her adopted mother, on her departure from Emmitsbug, in the very outset of her life as a Sister of Charity, these words we all remember: "Could I ever have left that sweet Valley of St. Joseph had it not been for God alone? Could all the fair promises of the world have forced me from it? No, I would rather have been torn in pieces than be snatched from that sweetest Asylum, where oft I had desired to dwell."

She was but a girl of sixteen when she

penned those words, expressive of her burning devotion to her first convent-home. Now, when time had mightily deepened and strengthened every affection of her being, with how much more force and feeling, she might truly again have cried out, on leaving her cherished Orphanage, the last conventual home of her old age:

"I would rather have been torn in pieces than be snatched from that sweetest Asylum, where oft I desired to dwell!"

But the unalterable decree had gone forth.

Tearless, amid the gushing floods of hundreds of weeping eyes—silent, amid the sobs and touching outcries of hundreds of lamenting voices—the heroic old Sister went forth from her beloved Asylum, on September the sixth, 1887, and took up her abode at Emmitsburg with the docility of a little child.

It was the crowning sacrifice of her long and self-sacrificing life: and immeasurable must have been the gain of her spirit's holiness in her meek, uncomplaining acceptance of this bitter cross.

It is so difficult to uproot the old. Too often, the aged tree that is transplanted to stranger soil, withers and dies. But,

"As gold is tried by the fire,
So the heart must be tried by pain,"

sings one of the sweetest of poets (who well knew, in her own experience, the blessed uses of adversity); and no one save God could discern how heavenly pure and bright the gold of Sister Gonzaga's virtue became in the fierce fire of those days of exile from her cherished Orphanage in Philadelphia.

And oh! how they missed her *there!* The very convent-cat yearned in vain for the sound of her soft voice, the gentle stroke of her caressing hand. Day and night—night and day—Sisters and children united in besieging the throne of grace with urgent petitions for the return of the loved one.

The Board of honorable Managers had met, and added their protests to the rest. The following clipping from a *Public Ledger* of that date will explain their immediate action in the matter:

“At a meeting held on Monday of the Board of Managers of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Archbishop Ryan presiding, the following petition to the Mother House of the Order was unanimously adopted and signed by them, asking for the return to the Asylum of SISTER MARY GONZAGA, who has been, for over fifty years, Superioress of this institution:

“‘The Board of Managers of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum have learned, with the deepest sorrow and regret, that Sister Gonzaga has been relieved of her

duties as Superior of this Asylum. Sister Gonzaga, during her long connection with the Asylum, has exhibited administrative abilities of a high order, which have not been diminished by time; and in the care, nurture, and training of the orphans she has shown a motherly love, joined with great tact, firmness and judgment, excelled, we believe, by no Sister in your order, renowned, as it has ever been, for the care and nurture of the orphan. The orphans who have left the Asylum, and those who are now under our charge, esteem and revere her; and her influence for good over the former, some of whom have become mothers and grandmothers, cannot be overestimated, and they are now numbered by the hundreds. The Board of Managers regard her retirement from the Asylum as a personal bereavement. Some of them have been connected with her in the management of the Asylum for a long term of years, and we all desire and pray that she be not removed, but that she be permitted to remain with us until God takes her to Himself, when her remains will be interred by those of us who survive her, side by side with those of one who was very dear to her in life—the sainted SISTER MARY JOHN.

“*Resolved*, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Very Rev. A. Mandine, C. M., and Mother Mariana, St. Joseph's House, Emmitsburg, Md.’

“Archbishop Ryan stated, after signing the petition, that this was the first time that he had signed a petition asking for the revocation of an order issued by the Superior General of any order.”

Finding, however, that all appeals remained, in the Providence of God, unanswered: and realizing that the Christmas of 1887 was fast approaching, the managers broached to the Sister-Servant who had succeeded Sister Gonzaga in command, the question of sending some fitting souvenir to the beloved old exile at Emmitsburg.

It was their purpose to forward to her, as a Christmas gift, a nice easy-chair, or some other article of furniture for her room; but Sister Mary Joseph, who well knew the unselfish character of the absent one, soon made clear to them the fact, that Sister Gonzaga would not be as well pleased with any personal gift, as she would be with such evidences of their regard as she might distribute freely to all the dear old Sisters about her.

The suggestion was readily acted upon.

The Managers sent on a Christmas box to their venerable friend, of such royal proportions—of such varied and unstinted contents—that the dear old ladies “on the retired list” at the Mother House, feasted like queens, that Christmas, on cakes, candies, fruits and what-not of holiday cheer.

Sister Gonzaga delighted in the remembrance of her old friends—was made happy in the distribution of their bounty to many an aged, infirm, and afflicted servant of the Lord, who,

like Simeon and Anne, of old, were wearing out the peaceful years, waiting for the coming of the King, and the gladsome chanting of their *Nunc dimittis*.

To her generous friends, the Managers, Sister Gonzaga returned this letter, which so clearly mirrors forth her pious and grateful heart:

“ST. JOSEPH’S HOUSE, EMMITSBURG.

“*To Judge Campbell, and all the Managers of St. Joseph’s Asylum.*

“GENTLEMEN: I feel deeply touched by your valued token of esteem and respect towards me, and I beg you to believe that I fully appreciate, as well as reciprocate, your feelings in my regard.

“My daily prayer for each and every Manager, is, that God may pour on you His choicest blessings for your kindness to the orphans and Sisters—especially to

“Yours most gratefully and sincerely,

“SISTER MARY GONZAGA.

“*Dec. 27th, 1887.*”

Not a breath of regret for her old Home and the beloved past—not a word to speak the void of the present—or voice the longing for the future! Truly, this *was* a valiant woman—heroic, self-controlled—obedient, even unto the death of her dearest affections.

XXXII.

HER RETURN TO ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM.



UCH a Sister as Mother Gonzaga well deserves the name of a Religious. She has been weighed in the balance of perfection, and not found wanting. She has been tried in the furnace of affliction, and come forth, pure gold. She exhibits to all, in very deed, the living exemplification of her Rule.

Months rolled by, freighted with continual supplications to heaven to send back the dear old "Mamma Gonnies" to the Home and friends that missed her loved presence so keenly. Appeals to Superiors also continued to be made, from time to time.

The present writer has a vivid recollection of having gone upon her knees to Rev. Père Mandine, on one occasion, at the Asylum, imploring him to give back the good old Mother, once more, to her devoted children.

But, even while his gentle words of courteous evasion implanted a sting of disappointment in the petitioner's heart, she could not fail to recognize and respect the excellent motives of the worthy Superior.

How could religious discipline be faithfully preserved if exceptions were to be lightly made in the case of this or that favorite Sister? The day of ready dispensations is ever the day of religious relaxation and abuse. Rules must be uncompromisingly, diligently kept, though poor human hearts ache or break in the keeping. But,

—“there are endless means and ways, some stormy,
and some sweet,
Through which God’s guiding hand conducts His
favored children’s feet!”

When the measure of religious detachment and self-sacrifice was filled to overflowing—when the spirit’s gold had been thoroughly purged in the furnace of Obedience from the smallest dross of earthly alloy—the happy hour came when Sister Gonzaga reaped the reward of her patient submission to the will of God.

Through an unusual and unforeseen combination of circumstances, crowned by the eloquent appeal to the Mother House of Very Rev. D. I. McDermott, rector of St. Mary’s Church, Philadelphia, the decree in regard to Sister Gonzaga was reversed; and, on the twentieth of December, 1888, she returned to St. Joseph’s Asylum, never more to leave it, until she should be carried

forth, at last, to the long, solemn "house of her eternity."

What a home-coming was that which brightened and blessed the frosty gloom of the December day!

Sisters, orphans, and friends, rushed to the Asylum door, to meet and welcome the venerable Mother, who was borne back to the scene of her lifelong labors with a jubilant triumph, a Roman conqueror might have envied!

All discipline was suspended for the nonce, and hearts, not heads, ruled the golden hour.

An old peddler-woman, mounting the Asylum steps, that morning, with her store of petty wares, was caught in the flood-tide of welcome, that deluged the entrance with hilarious orphans and smiling Sisters.

The old woman went down ingloriously in the shock of conflict, strewing the steps with her precious supply of pins, shoe-strings, buttons, and what-not. But, we venture to say, she lost nothing by the encounter; and, being gathered up and rehabilitated by kindly hands, must have shared, in her own fashion, in the universal gladness of the hour.

With wet eyes and swelling, grateful heart, dear old Sister Gonzaga was carried into the old-fashioned familiar parlor.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon.

Dinner was brought to her there—and there, she sat until nine, that evening, receiving, like a venerable queen, the calls and congratulations of her friends and subjects.

It was a genuine ovation of love and reverence. Crowds flocked to welcome her return. Some of the Managers—men in the first rank of social and professional life—kneeled at her feet, and kissed her hands with tender veneration.

Christmas, that year, at St. Joseph's Asylum, was (as may be well believed), a singularly happy one. The divine Christ-Child had brought to the little orphans their most precious Christmas gift—their beloved "Mamma Gonnies."

Three days later, the feast of the HOLY INNOCENTS was celebrated with unusual éclat—a formal reception being then given to Mother Gonzaga, in honor of her happy return.

At half-past five o'clock, on that day, the orphans, numbering one hundred and fifty children, and fifty of those who had received their training in the House, sat down to supper in the large refectory. After an abundant and merry meal, all adjourned to the classroom, where a pleasant entertainment was given.

While the children were singing the *Adeste fidelis*, Archbishop Ryan entered the room, in company with Very Rev. D. I. McDermott, and Mr. Philip Fitzpatrick (an honored member of the Board of Managers, since deceased).

At the conclusion of the little programme of recitations and musical selections by the children, a former inmate of the Asylum read these touching lines of greeting to the venerable Sister Gonzaga, who sat in the midst of her beloved ones, her placid face illuminated with the purest happiness :

“Welcome, once more, to the dear old Home,
Your children greet you with glad delight ;
Never again, may your footsteps roam
From the happy circle you grace to-night.

“The days were lonely, the days were long,
Sister and friend, since we parted here ;
There were plenty of sobs, and little of song
At the HOLY INNOCENTS’ feast, last year !

“And many a change hath come to pass
Since last we met on our festal day ;
We view, with tears, in Memory’s glass,
The dear, dead faces pass’d away.

“High in heaven, we trust, they share
The holy joy of this golden hour ;
Their bright eyes watch thro’ the perfum’d air,
Our budding hopes burst into flower !

“The Martyr Babes reflect their smile,
And Father Vincent is full of joy ;
St. Joseph waves his lilies—while
Sweet Mary sings to her Blessed Boy.

“ For the voice of our prayer hath reached that Shore,
Where the drooping blossom of Hope revives,
And our dear old Mother hath come, once more,
To bless and brighten her children’s lives.

“ O day of delight, so long desired !
Depart no more from our Home and shrine.
O Faith and Hope ! may our hearts be fired
With deathless flames from your torch divine !

“ And thou, O Love ! in thy beauteous heaven,
Grant us to meet, no more to sever !
The Lord hath taken—the Lord hath given—
The name of the Lord be blessed forever !”

Mr. Fitzpatrick then introduced His Grace, who made a few remarks, in the course of which, he said that he rejoiced with the children in their joy. He rejoiced to see them gather around their venerable mother—he might say *Grand-mother*, as he saw some of her grandchildren present—to make glad over her return.

“ You will remember,” he continued : “ you will remember this place, my dear children, when you leave it—the place where you prayed, and went to Mass. You will remember the kindness of the Sisters. All these things will have a good effect on you in the future ; and I hope you will all come back often to this House, where you have spent some of the happiest days of your

life. I rejoice again at the restoration of your Grandmother; and, like all grandmothers, she is very weak on her grandchildren, and very fond of them."

Among those present on this joyous occasion, were Hon. John M. Campbell, Surveyor of the Port of Philadelphia; Mr. George Anthony Heuisler, of Baltimore, adopted father of Sister Gonzaga; the Misses Donnelly, and Mrs. Philip Fitzpatrick.

Every creature in the Asylum rejoiced in the presence of the dear old Mother, so unexpectedly restored to them. Even *Pink*, the convent-cat, delighted to bask in the sunshine of her smile, rubbing his fat sides contentedly against the folds of her well-worn habit, and purring aloud the fulness of his feline congratulations.

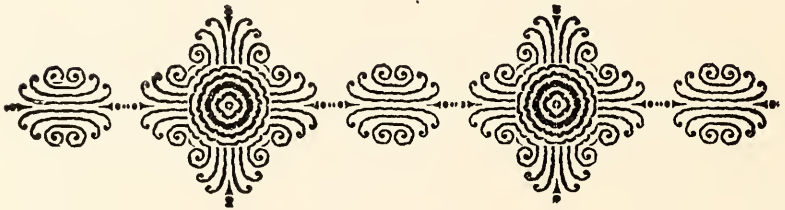
When, in due time, our beloved Sister was taken out to Germantown to visit her old friends at the Seminary, and her Sisters at the branch-house (Mill and Boyer streets)—the big Newfoundland dog, Rollo, had his own way, as well, of manifesting his surprise and delight at the sight of her.

He was not quite sure of her at first—it had been sixteen months since they had last met.

Coming close to where she sat, he snuffed inquiringly at her dear old hands. Then, he withdrew a pace or so, watching her keenly all the while.

At last, all dog-doubts were dissipated by unquestioning certainty. He made a frantic rush at her, with joyful barks of welcome; and, springing on her a dozen times, with his great paws on her shoulders, made insane efforts to kiss her cheeks and face. It would not have taken an interpreter of canine-lingo long to make out the meaning of those rapturous barks and "cavortings."

"I'm glad to see you back again, Mother Gonzaga!" said Rollo, every inch of him from his handsome head to his vibrating tail—"and I'm sure you're heartily welcome to us all! *Cead mille failthe!*"



XXXIII.

ADDITIONS TO THE ASYLUM. SISTER GONZAGA'S ACCIDENT.



THE year following Sister Gonzaga's return to St. Joseph's Asylum (where she now became simply a subordinate Sister, submitting herself joyfully to the direction of the new Sister-Servant), the old institution at Seventh and Spruce streets underwent considerable enlargement, improvement, and renovation.

In 1887, the large house adjoining the original 700 Spruce street, was bought: and later, added to the Asylum—communicating doors being opened on every floor. The institution now embraces Nos. 700, 702, and 704 Spruce; and the entire property extends all the way to the small street on the south. At the rear of the building, are the ample recreation ground and a fine garden.

As the newly-purchased house was four stories high, while the old building was only three stories and an attic, it was thought advisable to add another floor to the latter, making the whole structure present a handsome front of uniform height and symmetry.

This was almost the first of the improvements effected; and when it was completed, the front steps of the newly-acquired house were removed: and a turret was built over the centre of the façade, containing a niche, in which a fine statue of St. Joseph (the patron of the house) was placed.

The main entrance (with its spacious vestibule, adorned with the portraits of the dead benefactors of the institution), remained as it was; and no change was made in the great parlors to the left of the corridor. But the chapel, which had occupied, of yore, the room on the right, was transferred to the first floor of the new building.

The sanctuary was located at the north end; and greater privacy was insured by leaving a space for sacristy purposes between the front windows on Spruce street and the stained-glass windows, back of the pretty altar. These windows represent, respectively, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Joseph supporting the Divine Child on his arm; and they are the gift of the late Mr. Leandro de la Cuesta, in memory of his dead sister, Josefa.

The former chapel was divided into a vestry-room on the front, and a breakfast room for the convent-chaplain, in the rear.

It was of this little old chapel, that the fol-



INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL OF ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM, SEVENTH AND SPRUCE STREETS, PHILADELPHIA.

lowing appreciative lines were written, many changeful years ago :

“THE SISTER’S CHAPEL.”*

“It is no grand or pillared place

With marble altars and frescoed walls,
(And thro’ no curtains of costly lace

Or crimson damask, the sunshine falls)—
But an humble spot with a noiseless door,
And the seal of the poor on its naked floor.

“The wooden benches are hard and bare,

The pictures homely, and far apart ;
Only the *Way of the Cross* hangs there,
And the dolorous Queen with her bleeding Heart ;
But our Lord’s dear Wounds and His Blessed Mother’s
Are better companions than any other’s.

“And the air is full of the ripened sweets

Of a shoal of lilies, and pinks, and roses,
Which, under the veil, at our Lady’s feet,
In a strange, old-fashioned bowl reposes.
While, in from the sunny garden, stray
The voices of orphans at their play.

“Dimly seen, thro’ the windows low,

The white-capp’d Sisters join the game ;
Merrily heading the ranks, as though
That child-like sport were their highest aim ;
But, after a while, the bell will ring—
And they’ll all come hither to pray and sing.

* From *Poems* by Eleanor C. Donnelly.

“Two by two, thro’ the twilight dim,
They will come—each one, with her placid face—
To visit our Lord and worship Him,
In the Sacrament of His love and grace ;
Ah ! what could be sweeter than prostrate prayer
To the hidden Jesus Who watches there ?

* * * * *

“Dear hearts ! if our faith were stronger, quicker,
We’d ask, like the saints, for nothing more
Than the lamp of the altar’s sacred flicker,
And the constant sight of that small gilt door !
We’d crave but to kneel on our knees, all day,
Do naught but adore, and weep, and pray.

* * * * *

“Here, while the odor of buds and grasses
Blows from the sunny Asylum-square—
Let us remember our careless Masses,
Our cold Communions, our visits rare ;
And the hymns we chanted (like empty actions),
And the prayers recited with grave distractions.

* * * * *

“Here, at the rail, where the step is worn,
And the rays of the hanging lamp fall brightest—
We make a renewal of fervor, born
In the days when our souls were at their whitest :
And the dear baptismal vows repeat,
While the tranquil tears fall fast and sweet.

“O friends, who are forced with the world to grapple,
With the terrible, tempting world outside,
Steal in, when you can, to the Sisters' chapel,
And there, for a while, with our Lord abide;
And the light of this little lamp will calm
Your hearts, like the touch of an angel's palm.”

Ah! yes, how happy were those blessed, peaceful days of yore, when we used to steal into the ancient chapel, and watch dear old Mother Gonzaga at her quiet prayers, or passing to or from the little altar, with the light of God upon her placid face!

O golden days,

—“when our souls were at their whitest,”

ye can never more return! O tender, saint-like Mother Gonzaga! thou canst come no more to us, to edify us in the little chapel of ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM!

But *we can go to thee!* We can follow thee to the shining altar of the Angel of Great Council, to the everlasting tabernacle of the Divine High-priest, in “the House not made with hands!”

God grant, then, that it may be with our robes washed clean in the Blood of the Lamb, and with the palm of victory in our grasp, that we may meet thee before His Throne!

On the twenty-sixth of July, 1896, the dear old Mother fell, in her room, and fractured her hip. At her great age—she had now reached the more than four-score years of her holy Father Vincent—this accident was most serious.

She never walked another step. It was truly the beginning of the end; for, intense were her sufferings during the subsequent fifteen months that God was pleased to leave her with her beloved ones at the Asylum.

“Never in my life,” says her devoted Sister-companion and nurse: “never have I witnessed such perfect patience and resignation as hers—not a murmur, not a complaint. There was nothing cranky or peculiar about her, as with some invalids. Everything was too good, every one too kind.”

These words recall the spirit of her holy Foundress, Mother Seton, of whom it was recorded that “peace, love, confidence, joy,” were “the sentiments that supported her in her last trial, and by which she administered comfort to those around her.”

And, as with her, so with our good Sister Gonzaga, “the peaceful quiet which she enjoyed was not the result of a presumptuous reliance upon her own merits; for she had a lively fear of the divine judgments. But her soul was tranquillized by that filial confidence which is

inspired by the love of God, and the consideration of His infinite mercy."

When in health, Sister Gonzaga would never permit anything special to be served to her. Even during her last long illness, true to the dictum of Louise de Marillac (the first Foundress of the Sisters of Charity, in France), that "if anything were done for her different from the other Sisters, it would signify that, in death, she was not worthy to be a true Sister of Charity, and servant of the members of Jesus Christ"—our dear old Mother was accustomed to protest against any little delicacies being brought to her, saying with touching humility, "Ah! you treat me too well! The ordinary community-fare suits me best."

"I would argue this point with her," says the present Sister-servant, who nursed her so faithfully, "telling her that Superiors wished the sick and infirm Sisters to have all they required. How many times has she said to me: 'May God bless you! And when you grow old, may you have some one to do for you what you have done for me!'

"I would say: 'Why, Mother Gonzaga, you are only receiving the hundredfold which our Lord has promised to those who leave all to follow Him.' She would answer so gently: 'Ah! I receive more than the hundredfold!

Where is the old Sister who receives the care and affection that is bestowed upon me? I know of none, Sister.' ”

Some months before her precious death, our Lord was pleased to deprive her of her sight. A cataract formed on each eye. Literally, she sat, thereafter, “in darkness, and in the shadow of death.”

Her blindness was a sore affliction to her, because she could now do nothing with those useful hands that had toiled so long for God and His poor and suffering ones. Up to this time, she had always been employed—never losing a moment.

She spoke of an operation ; but, because of her great age, her Superior opposed it. “Why should I sit *in idleness*,” she urged, “when I could be usefully employed?” But, she submitted herself, as usual, with child-like docility to the will of God, and of those whom He had appointed over her.

The Light of lights was with her ever in her visual darkness ; and to Him, she might have cried out constantly, and far more truly than Milton, in the sublime words of that blind poet :

“Thy glorious Face
Is leaning toward me ; and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place—
And there is no more night.

“ On my bended knee,
I recognize Thy purpose clearly shown :
My vision Thou hast dimmed, that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

“ I have naught to fear :
This darkness is the shadow of Thy wing :
Beneath it, I am almost sacred ; here,
Can come no evil thing.” *

* These touching lines were found in Sister Gonzaga's scrap-book, after her death.



XXXIV.

DEATH OF SISTER GONZAGA. AFFECTING INCIDENTS AT THE ASYLUM.



SIGHTLESS, hopelessly-crippled, bending under the accumulated infirmities of four-score and five years, worldlings and unbelievers might deem the condition of our dear old heroine, at this stage of her career, a truly pitiable and wretched one.

Observers of such calibre never penetrate beneath the surface of things; they are totally ignorant of the beauty and blessedness of the hidden, suffering life of the faithful follower of Christ. They know not, neither by accepted theory nor practical experience, that, in the spiritual, as well as the material existence,

“—darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.”

In the affliction of her blindness, her helplessness, Sister Gonzaga worshipped humbly the Will of God, and recognized fresh occasions of acquiring merit. These painful deprivations furnished her with continual opportunities of cultivating spiritual detachment. Cutting off,



REAR VIEW OF ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM, SEVENTH AND SPRUCE STREETS, PHILADELPHIA.

as they did, the manifold distractions of her busy life, they left her in the quiet evening of her advanced age, uninterruptedly united with God, "almost sacred," indeed (as the poet had said), in the dark "shadow of His wing."

She might not be able longer to refresh her soul with the reading of those pious volumes that had been the consolation of her life; but the Rosary, the blessed book of the blind, was seldom missing from her hands, and her mental sight was ever joyously riveted upon the magnificent Mysteries of our faith, represented by Mother Mary's Beads.

The tranquil months rolled by, freighted with incalculable graces and merits for our dear suffering Sister; yet her tender nurses began to fear the early approach of death.

The autumn of 1897 had arrived.

"On the sixth and seventh of October," says her devoted companion, "our beloved Sister seemed very weak. The doctor told us that the end was nearing; but we could not bear the thought of losing our treasure, and hoped she would rally, as she had done so many times before."

(Thrice had she already been anointed by the hands of Very Rev. D. I. McDermott—each time to be raised up by the potent "prayer of faith.")

“ But, alas ! ”—continues our convent-annalist —“ her beautiful crown was now, at last, completed. Our Blessed Lord was satisfied ; and she was about to enter that heavenly Home, for which she had so long and so faithfully labored.

“ About the half-hour after three, on the morning of October the eighth, I noticed a deathly pallor and oppression. She was perfectly conscious, however, answered each time I spoke to her, and took what I offered her.

“ An hour later, we said the Beads, she passing each bead between her fingers, evidently joining in the devotion as far as she could.

“ On concluding the Beads, we began the prayers for the Departing ; and, at five minutes before five o'clock, her precious soul passed to her heavenly Spouse, without pain, agony or struggle.

“ It was like the sweet sleep of an infant. There was not upon that dear face even a drop of the death-sweat.

“ I could not realize the fact that she had gone forever from us,” she concludes : “ Nor can I yet. I still feel that she must come back to us again. Gazing upon her vacant chair and bed, I almost fancy I see her. Her spirit, I know, ever hovers near us ; and she is, I am confident, the guardian angel of the dear old home she loved so well.”

The body of the venerable servant of God was conveyed, in due time, to the chapel of the Asylum. The precious remains, attired in the habit of the Sisters of Charity, were placed in a cloth-covered casket, lined with rich white satin—the gift of Mrs. George A. Brennan, of Philadelphia (who, in imitation of her generous deceased husband, has, for many years, gratuitously attended to the interment of the dead Sisters and children of St. Joseph's Asylum).

Sister Gonzaga's hands were folded, and held a crucifix, rosary, and a copy of her Religious Vows, registered before high heaven more than sixty-seven years before. The golden crown presented to her on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee was placed above the white *cornette* of St. Vincent—a feeble emblem of the resplendent diadem, awaiting our beloved Sister in the Kingdom of her royal Spouse and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The lid of the casket bore a silver crucifix and plate, on which was this simple inscription :

“ Sister Mary Gonzaga.
Died October 8, 1897.
Aged 85 years.”

The news of her death spread, like wild-fire, throughout the city. Crowds flocked to the Asylum to express their sorrow at the passing of the venerated dead—their friendly sympathy with the Sisters and orphans, who mourned her loss.

Hundreds of letters and telegrams were received by the Superioress of the House—all breathing lively sentiments of love for the deceased, and condolence for the survivors.

The Very Rev. J. McGill, C. M. (Visitor), being absent from Philadelphia at the time of Sister Gonzaga's death, sent the following letter from Niagara University :

“MY VERY DEAR SISTER MARY JOSEPH :

“The grace of our Lord be with us forever ! I said Mass, this morning, for the repose of the soul of our dear, venerable, beloved Sister Gonzaga. So she has gone *home* at last ! The Mother of the poor, of the orphans, of the children, is no more. Every Son and Daughter of St. Vincent in the community lament her loss, and are praying for her. The whole of Philadelphia, Protestant and Catholic, grieves over her death. I know your tender, warm heart feels broken, because you were nearer and dearer to her than any one else. But, my child, we must be resigned, and say, ‘God’s will be done !’ Try to bear up under this trial. Cheer up the other good Sisters and children, and may our good Lord bless you all.

"With a good wish to all, and every grace for your own self,

"I am yours devotedly in St. Vincent,

"JAMES MCGILL, C. M."

The following letter was written by a Holy Cross Father of the UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, Indiana, sending condolence in the name of his community. It may not be amiss to insert it here, as it shows in what veneration our dear Sister Gonzaga was held by all who knew her:

"NOTRE DAME, IND., October 9, 1897.

"SISTER MARY JOSEPH.

"*Kind Friend*:—It is needless to say that I am very much grieved to learn of the death of our mutual friend, Mother Gonzaga. I immediately engaged the Masses of seven of our Fathers, besides my own. I had the announcement of her death made in all the houses of our community. This morning, was the regular Communion for all the members of the community, and the hundreds of mementoes that were made, will, I hope, be sufficient to relieve the precious soul of our departed friend, even if she be in Purgatory. Heaven was certainly stormed in her behalf, this morning: although I feel confident that she is already in Heaven. Her name will be found in the *Ave Maria* obituary, next week.

"I will continue to say Mass for her every day, until I hear from you. I have already transferred the

Masses which I had on hand, to two other priests, in order to leave myself free to attend to this *promised* duty. I pray that God may give you grace to bear up under this severe trial. I understand fully what a heavy cross it is for you to carry.

“Remember me to all the Sisters, and believe me,

“Very Sincerely your friend,

“M. J. REGAN, C. S. C.”

The secular press of Philadelphia was loud in its praises of the venerable Mother Gonzaga, all uniting in bearing testimony to her virtues and natural gifts, and in relating incidents of her long and eventful life.

How truly applicable to this holy woman, in this regard, were the words of our Lord: “He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted”!

Glorified in death, was this aged religious who, in her spirit of simple lowliness and unobtrusiveness, had ever shunned, through life, the popularity and plaudits of the world.

From an extended eulogy of her, which appeared in the *Public Ledger* of that date, we extract this passage:

“Of late years, she had relinquished the active work of the Asylum to younger Sisters, but she was revered and loved as much in her weakness as in the days when she had direct control of the entire institution. To the utmost of her ability, she continued

to aid in the conduct of the Asylum, and with her own hands cut out the dresses worn by the children, and the habits worn by the Sisters.

“In the important matters of administration, she was always consulted by her successor, Sister Mary Joseph, the present Superior, who readily deferred to her more experienced judgment.

“For some time, Mother Gonzaga’s eye-sight had been very poor on account of cataract; and an operation was to have been performed for its removal. ‘But the Divine Healer gave her her sight again, this morning,’ said one of the Sisters at the Asylum, yesterday: ‘*she has better sight than we have, now!*’”

Said the Philadelphia *Press*, the day after her interment:

“A life of seclusion and self-sacrifice, the death of a martyr, the obsequies of a queen. Such were the three episodes in the earthly career of SISTER MARY GONZAGA, which was closed and sealed, yesterday. When this noble woman’s body was laid in the earth, in St. Mary’s graveyard, it seemed almost a pity that the senses of the dead were unresponsive to all the splendor of song, beauty of ritual, and eloquence of tongue, that marked the journey to the grave. Yet the glorious woman, in whose behalf, and in whose name, all this honor was poured forth, would have been the last to dwell upon a word said in her own praise. Her long life was given to prayer and sacrifice, to the consoling of the poor and afflicted; and, for more than fifty long years, she was the director

and the chief pillar of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, at Seventh and Spruce streets."

In the *Catholic Standard and Times*, of Philadelphia, of that date, appeared, among other beautiful tributes to the dead, the following:

" IN MEMORY OF

MOTHER MARY GONZAGA, WHO DIED AT ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHAN ASYLUM, PHILADELPHIA, ON OCTOBER 8, 1897, IN HER EIGHTY-SIXTH YEAR.
*Inscribed to Sister Mary Joseph and her Community,
with Affectionate Sympathy.*

" Thrice, in the rounding of one little year,
Saint Mary's hallowed temple hath revealed
An honored priest reposing on his bier,
His pallid lips in icy silence sealed.

" Thrice, have regretful tears bedewed the urn
Where sacerdotal ashes were enshrined ;
Youth, age, and ripen'd manhood, each in turn,
Unto Saint Mary's funeral vaults consigned. *

" And now, before the fading flow'rs have strewn
Their last, sweet, withered petals round the
place :
Or early snows lie white upon the stone
That shuts from sight each well-remembered
face—

* REV. HUGH J. MCMANUS, December, 1896; REV. EUGENE J. BARDET, March, 1897; RIGHT REV. MGR. TONER, September, 1897.

“ Before the shades of the anointed Dead
Have melted from Saint Mary’s aisles away,
We hear, once more, the mourners’ solemn tread—
Another saint is here in death, to-day !

“ Dear SISTER GONZAGA ! good mother, friend
Of Christ’s own little ones—His precious poor !
From Life’s beginning to its blessed end,
Thy words were Wisdom’s, and thy works were
pure.

“ In tender youth, betrothèd to thy Lord ;
For three-score years and ten, His faithful spouse,
He was thy aim—thy solace—thy reward—
Bound to His Sacred Heart by deathless vows !

“ Toiler of yore with KENRICK, NEUMANN, WOOD,
One of our Faith’s first local pioneers !
So long hath been thy service, and so good,
Thou needest not our prayers or pitying tears !

“ For death is gain to thee, tho’ loss to all
Thou leavest here. Thy prayers must plead for
them ;
The orphans’ tears that sparkle on thy pall
Shall prove, on high, thy brightest diadem.

“ The dear old heart that loved them now is stilled,
The dear old voice they loved is heard no more ;
She waits afar with ardent yearning filled,
To bid them welcome to the eternal shore !

“ Prate not of sculptur’d immortality—

Her children’s virtues shall *her* heart content
If all who look upon their lives shall see
In each, their Mother’s lasting monument.

“ The old-time friends may leave us, one by one ;
The ancient landmarks swiftly fade away—
The good that SISTER GONZAGA hath done
Shall live when brass and marble both decay !

“ Then, lay her gently down, in peace and trust,
Where angel-memories shall guard her bed ;
Her soul is with her God ; her virgin dust
Sleeps sweetly with Saint Mary’s sainted dead !

“ ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

“ October 12, 1897.”



XXXV.

SISTER GONZAGA'S FUNERAL. FATHER SCULLY'S SERMON.

DURING the time that the venerable remains of the dead Sister were exposed in the chapel of St. Joseph's Asylum, thousands came to look, for the last time, upon her placid face, which bore upon it, even in the mystery of death, the impress of an exalted sanctity.

The large throng was especially noticeable, on the evening of October the eleventh (the night before her funeral), when a concourse of sorrowing people surged in and out the wide vestibule of the institution, or stood in groups around the bier in the chapel, gazing upon the waxen face of the dead (shining fair in the light of the burning tapers), or wiping away the floods of tears that flowed in tender recollection of the many merciful words and deeds of the beloved Mother Gonzaga.

Says one of the attendant Sisters: "I saw splendid-looking gentlemen stand beside her casket, look intently on her face, then stoop and kiss her hands with as much reverence as they would a sacred relic."

The emotion of these sincere mourners was voiced by a reporter from one of our great local dailies, who remarked on the occasion:

"If the soul of such a woman were not instantly translated at death, to Paradise, the way to the abode of the Immaculate must surely be a road of sand and thorns."

Sister Gonzaga's funeral took place from the Orphanage, at ten o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, October the twelfth.

Long before the hour fixed for the obsequies, priests, Sisters of Charity, and of other religious communities from Reading, Brooklyn, Baltimore, Germantown, and also a large number of personal friends throughout the city, had arrived.

The funeral cortege was an immensely large one.

Coming first, were priests from all sections of this city, and other places; also, Right Rev. Bishop Prendergast, Coadjutor of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Philadelphia, and the students from St. Vincent's Seminary, Germantown.

Following, were the Board of Managers, the Sisters, orphans of the house (all wearing black), and two hundred of the former inmates of the Asylum (also in black), wearing their medals and blue ribbons, as members of the Confraternity of the Children of Mary. Friends and benefactors of the Asylum closed the line.

Within a few minutes of their arrival at the church, the building was filled to overflowing, the immense throng of people crowding the seats, aisles, and every available portion of sitting and standing room. Great numbers were unable to gain admission to the sacred edifice.

Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated, Bishop Prendergast presiding in the sanctuary, and giving the absolution of the body.

The five altars were one blaze of lights. Several hundred tapers burned around the casket. It was, indeed, more like a wedding than a funeral.

Rev. J. Hartnett, of the Congregation of the Mission, was the celebrant of the Mass; Rev. Ernest O. Hiltermann, rector of Holy Trinity (German) Church, deacon; Rev. Edward Quinn, C. M., Baltimore, sub-deacon; and Rev. John J. Duffy (assistant at St. Mary's), master of ceremonies.

The music was the Gregorian chant. It was sung by the Seminarians from St. Vincent's Seminary, Germantown, where the Theological School of the Fathers of the Mission, and the male branch of the Order, corresponding to that of the Sisters of Charity, are situated.

In the absence of the rector of St. Mary's, Very Rev. D. I. McDermott (who was then in Europe), the sermon was preached by Rev. John

Scully, S. J., of St. Joseph's church; and was, in substance, as follows:

"St. Paul tells us, in his first letter to the Corinthians, that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. In this, the apostle would show to us that the base, the lowly of this world, the contemptible and the things that are not, hath God chosen, in order to confound the great, the mighty, and the things that are. How true in all ages have been these inspired words of the Apostle! How true, to-day, this foolishness! This wisdom of the world, so foolish in the eyes of God, differs in degree and kind in different ages. In our age, it shows itself in the attempt to divide human philanthropy and brotherly love from religion. Take the intellect and culture of this great city in which we live, and what does it lay down as law, except it be that mankind must practice *altruism*, as they call it—brotherly love, the civil virtue, by which alone society among men can be made possible? Yet, not one word about the essential basis, which even the modern pagan sees is necessary. When talking about our rights to God, and when talking of our obligations to one another, they say nothing about our obligations to God, without which nothing can rest on a solid basis. The wisdom of this world is foolishness; the lowly are chosen by God to confound the worldly

wise. In the days of old, God raised David from the shepherd of a flock to be the ruler of His people. Christ chose the poor fishermen to be His apostles. He called Vincent de Paul from the lowly occupation of a shepherd to be a wonder-worker, a marvel, a propagator of Charity, not only in his own days, but up to the present time. How many millions of dollars are spent in the spirit of modern philanthropy, for education, in order to raise men up (as they think), to give men a chance in life! Because such philanthropy is divided from religion, it fails. The late Mr. Vaux said, on the occasion of what, perhaps, was his last official visit to our Eastern Penitentiary: 'When I first came here, I found the children of the poor, and the ignorant; now, I find my old school-mates.'

"Thus, are spent millions in charity, or rather, in alms-giving, for it is not worthy to be called CHARITY. What is the result? It puffs up one with pride, and another with envy. The reason why the thing is done differently is the motive underlying the acts of thousands and tens of thousands who give up their lives to works of true charity. Have you ever heard of a sick or wounded soldier in a hospital wishing to become a member of the church to which a trained nurse belonged? How differ-

ent, when the motive is that of Jesus Christ! Thousands in our army hospitals, as is well known, begged to be allowed to die in the religion of the devoted Sisters who attended them.

“It was this that, after the Civil War, caused a bishop to receive a petition from a remote part of his diocese, for a priest to be sent there, and a church built. He replied that not only was he ignorant that sufficient Catholics were there for such a foundation, but that there was even *one* Catholic. The answer was: ‘There are no Catholics here, as yet; but we are men who, in the late war, were attended by the Sisters, and who mean to become Catholics.’

“The base, the ignoble and contemptible things of this world hath God chosen for His work. What is more foolish in the eyes of the world—what is more despised and held in contempt by the intellectual and the cultured—than poverty? Yet, the Sisters are bound by vows of poverty to be as poor as Christ, to live a life of self-renunciation, depending on one another for their very food and raiment.

“What more foolish in the eyes of the world than that? As the Wise Man hath said, they are a parable of reproach, looked on with derision. What is more foolish, more base, more spiritless, more contemptible, than to find women, ladies, willingly binding themselves, not by im-

pulse, but by vocation, not as a mere whim, but perpetually, to live by *rule*, (to which no man ever yet got accustomed); bound continually to purify their acts, to make them meritorious in the sight of God? And obedience! The world hates, loathes, obedience! Yet, our Divine Lord was obedient even unto death, and the death of the cross.

“What is the result of all our modern so-called charity and philanthropy? Nothing lasting. On the contrary, search the hearts of thousands of men, women and children, who have been benefited by the Sisters, and you will find *there* the enduring love of God.

“Such was the mission of the devoted lady (whose remains lie before us), and who spent seventy years in doing good. Many philanthropists have monuments raised to them, and are looked upon as public benefactors, and are honored as such. Take the career of him or her who was greatest among them, or, take all of them together: what are all compared with a life such as this dead Sister’s, spent in the care of the sick, poor and needy?

“One long life devoted to doing good. A life, not only an imitation of Jesus Christ in its acts, but what is more necessary and more difficult, a life in imitation of His cross. The world looks in reproach upon such a life. How fre-

quently has Sister Gonzaga been sneered at on the street, by many a non-Catholic, who beheld her, uncomprehendingly, in her poor dress and strange bonnet! How often has the world looked with contempt upon her who served the Lord so long and faithfully! How He loved that soul that did as He did, and for the same reason.

"All I have said could be said of almost any other Sister of Charity, but of her who lived for over seventy years in religion, how much could be said, those only can know who lived with her, and knew her.

"Of how few can this be remarked—to have combined in one and the same person the power of execution, the power of government, and at the same time, the spirit of kindness and of great-heartedness, which does not make commands ever necessary! Without emotion, without anger. No one ever saw that kindly face ruffled. This is rare in the world. Yes, even rare in religious life.

"To speak of her life, and to realize that thousands and tens of thousands of orphans have had her care, many becoming mothers of families, and bringing up their children, influenced by her example. To realize her hard work in the Military Hospital; to think of the thousands and tens of thousands dealt with directly by her, or indirectly through her, as Superioress. What a world of well-doing!

“Seventy years in religion ! What a wonderful crown is won by her whose dead body is lying here ! Seventy years a member of the Community, whose very name is held dear by the enemies of her faith, as a synonym of all that is good in humanity—something which raises humanity, and brings it close to God.

“Now, her reign of sorrow and desolation has passed away. She has gone forth from the scene of her labors to her rest. She has gone into the sight of Jesus Christ, Whom in life she made her Friend. Not to meet the severe face of a Judge, but the smiling countenance of a dear Friend. Who would recall her ? Not those who loved her most, who lived with her in community ; not those who were the recipients of her bounty.

“What so glorious as a death such as hers, after seventy years in God’s service ! Says St. Hilary : ‘ Shall I fear to die after I have served my Lord for seventy years ? ’

“So died she, because she knew the good Master she served. As theologians tell us, God makes known to His saints the needs of those whom they have left behind—O thou, who knowest the needs of thy children, be their advocate and pattern, now, as even in life ! Be unto us a mother, and pray for us, that we may go forth, as thou hast, from this valley of affliction

and tears, to the sunshine of God the Father, to live forever with his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

Six of the theological students from St. Vincent's Seminary, Germantown, acted as Sister Gonzaga's pall-bearers. When the lid was, at last, placed upon the open casket, and the body of the venerable dead was removed by reverent hands to its long resting-place in St. Mary's graveyard, hardly an eye was dry in all that vast assemblage: sobbing was heard from every quarter of the church.

It was a veritable triumph of humility—the exaltation, after death, of one who had humbled herself, during life, in the hidden lowliness of Christ the Lord.

"Old and young, boys and girls, who, at one time or another," says a journalist of that day: "were the recipients of Sister Gonzaga's charity, or had come under her motherly training and influence, refused to be comforted (as her coffin was slowly removed from its place in St. Mary's central aisle); and remained in the church to give vent, in tears, to their feelings."

One of the most affecting partings was witnessed in the case of an aged, intelligent colored man, who had driven the Sisters, whenever they needed a carriage, for over fifty years. Sister Gonzaga regarded him as a trusted

friend, who had proved his unerring honesty for so long a period. He wept bitterly, as he placed his hand on hers, and then kissed it. When speaking of her, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he said: "She was a woman, a lady, a Christian, full of good works. Although I am a Methodist, when I was sick she treated me with a mother's care. I cannot tell of her many acts of kindness to me during all those years."

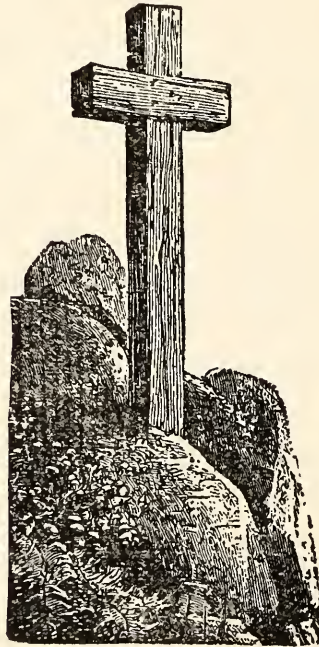
Upon the coffin and grave of our beloved old Sister, were heaped many beautiful floral offerings—tributes of love and respect from the Asylum managers and friends.

And there, in the quiet old graveyard, close to her dear Mary John, and others of her Sisterhood who had long gone before her; in the shadow of the blessed, ancient church she had loved so well in life, the mortal remains of SISTER MARY GONZAGA GRACE were laid to rest until the Judgment Day.

Looking up from the freshly-turned earth of her interment to the blue, arching, October sky, many an eye, wet with tender tears, seemed, that day, to see her enfranchised spirit, glorious with light and loveliness, surrounded by her dear ones, in the Home, sweet Home of the saints. No longer sightless, no longer crippled, no longer old—but bright-eyed, hale,

erect, and young forever with the vigor and youth of God, she seemed to breathe forth to those she left behind, the consoling words of the sacred poet :

. . . "The night is gone,
And with the morn, those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved, long since, and lost a while."



XXXVI.

THE GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM.



ABOUT a year before the death of Mother Gonzaga, His Grace, Most Reverend Archbishop Ryan, urged strongly upon the Board of Managers of St. Joseph's Asylum that, in view of the insufficiency of accommodations for the increasing demands for admission to the house, a new building for the orphans should be erected in German-town.

The Board objected to the proposition, not seeing their way clear, just then, to the necessary funds to pay for such a structure.

The children of the Orphanage are all free—nothing being received for their maintenance from city or State. The institution is wholly dependent on the donations and legacies of benefactors.

His Grace, the Archbishop, was much disappointed by the reluctance of the Board to act upon his suggestion. He very wisely deemed an additional establishment in a more rural district, a necessity for the class of children received at the Asylum—removing them, as it would, to a greater distance from the snares

and temptations of the older and more thickly-populated quarters of a great city.

The slight friction on this head between the Board of Managers and its President, greatly troubled the good Sister-Servant of the Asylum. There had always existed the most perfect harmony among superiors in the management of the Asylum and its financial affairs.

During the forty-four years that Sister Gonzaga had acted as its Sister-Servant, there had never been the slightest misunderstanding between herself and the Managers.

She was accustomed to urge upon her Sisterhood the most profound respect for them—the warmest love and gratitude to all the benefactors of the house. When sickness, sorrow, or death came to the households of these excellent friends, she or her Sisters never failed to visit them, and console them in their afflictions by constant evidences of their grateful esteem and sympathy.

This kindness was never forgotten. How keenly, indeed, the good offices of Sister Gonzaga and her assistants were appreciated, even by a man of the world, may be gathered from this letter addressed to Sister, some seven years before her death, by a late well-known gentleman of the highest social standing in Philadelphia:

“TO SISTER MARY GONZAGA :

“*Very dear and beloved Sister*:—How can I, satisfactorily to myself, express to you the gratitude I feel for your constant, never-ending goodness, ever evinced towards me, and towards my dearly beloved sisters. Almighty God will bless you all for everything that, in your loving hearts, you have done for us, whilst here upon this earth. In your holy prayers, and in those of all our dear friends, the Sisters and the children, we have always had a share. Surely, when I shall be here no more—in your generous natures, your own dear self and all the dear Sisters and the Children will never forget the devoted old friend who will carry his tender affection for you all, even beyond the Grave, to another and a better world, where, through the merits of our Divine Saviour, we shall meet again never more to part; and where, if Almighty God in His infinite merciful goodness, forgives me—depend upon it, you will, one and all, be most fervently interceded for.

“Let my last words be—Be very kind to my dearly-beloved sister, Nemesia. Do it for her sake, do it for my sake; it is the great favor I crave of you all, before leaving this sad world, so full of bitter trials and sorrows.

“That Almighty God’s choicest blessings be ever yours for time and for Eternity, dearest Sister, is the heartfelt prayer of your devoted old friend.

“LEANDRO DE LA CUESTA.

“In my *Will*, and in *Memorandum A*, I leave to you a few Souvenirs, to keep in kind remembrance of Nemesia, Josefa, and myself.

“ I also leave a *Perpetual Annuity*; and *twice every year*, it will be paid over to your dear self and to our dear friends, the Sisters, and to all your successors *FOREVER*, thereby forcibly reminding you all *To never forget in your holy prayers* the devoted, loving old friends departed.”

It was to the generosity and benevolence of this noble-hearted Spanish gentleman, LEANDRO DE LA CUESTA, that the Sisters of Charity in Philadelphia eventually owed, in a great measure, the fulfilment of Archbishop Ryan's desire for a new establishment in Germantown.

The GONZAGA MEMORIAL was the outcome of the devoted love and princely liberality of that incomparable friend, who had promised to carry his affection for Sister Gonzaga and all her subjects at St. Joseph's Asylum, “even beyond the grave, to another and a better world.”

A day or two before our venerable Sister's death, the perplexed and grieving Superioress of the institution thus adjured the dying Mother: “Dear Mamma Gonnie, when you go to heaven and see our Blessed Lord, won't you please say to Him that, if He wishes the House to go up (in Germantown), will He not, if it be for His honor and glory, remove the obstacles, and send the means to pay for it?”

The dying Sister listened quietly to the

request. She waited a moment in silence, and then replied very emphatically: "I shall attend to it; for, in Heaven, I can never love less the home so dear to my heart here. When there, I shall ever pray for all—Superiors, companions, children, Managers, benefactors, friends, all who were dear to me—all who were kind to our orphans."

Sister Gonzaga died three days later; and it was soon discovered that the devoted heart of the dear old Mother (always keenly alive to the needs of her cherished orphans), had already anticipated during life, the Sister-Servant's request in their behalf.

Well knowing how deeply St. Joseph, the guardian and protector of the Holy Child Jesus, was interested in the welfare of the poor little ones who were the earthly representatives of that Divine Infant, Sister Gonzaga, during her long illness, addressed to the blessed Foster-father, in all simplicity, on his feast-day, a little prayer for aid in the present difficulty of the institution.

This, she committed to paper, and, with child-like trust in his intercession, placed under a statue of St. Joseph, before which she was wont to kneel in prayer and devout meditation.

There, it was discovered, in the December after her death, couched in the following words:

“To our dear Patron and Protector, St. Joseph!

“Please, hear our prayer!

“Blessed St. Joseph, through your joys and sorrows, we supplicate you to procure a House, that the orphans may be preserved therein from the dangers of the world, that they may love God, His Blessed Mother, yourself, and our holy Father, St. Vincent, more and more; and that they may never be so unfortunate as to lose their innocence. I beg this favor on your holy feast—the day I gave myself to our dearest Lord entirely and forever. I beg you to present to God THE TWO FAMILIES OF ST. VINCENT, all in this house, all belonging to it, Sisters, children, Managers, friends, and benefactors, that all may persevere in God’s holy love to the end. Amen.”

When this touching prayer to St. Joseph was read by the Board of Managers, tears filled the eyes of those venerable gentlemen.

“This is a voice from the grave,” they exclaimed, deeply moved by this evidence of the loving confidence in the power of the illustrious Foster-father of Jesus, manifested by his devoted old client.

Without a dissenting vote, all agreed that a building should be erected in Germantown—that it should be a Memorial of the beloved

Sister Gonzaga ; and that it should be, as far as means and circumstances would permit, in every way worthy of that admirable woman, whose voice had, as it were, spoken solemnly from heaven to secure its establishment.

This prompt answer to Sister's prayer—this sudden removal of the weighty obstacles and enforced opposition to the execution of Archbishop Ryan's wise suggestion, appeared to some only a little short of the miraculous.

"To me," said the happy Sister-Servant of St. Joseph's Asylum, "it all seemed wonderful. I doubt not our dear old Mother is in heaven. I always felt that she (as was asserted of our first Foundress, Mlle. Le Gras), never lost her baptismal innocence. I loved her as a mother, and I venerated her as a saint."

This (let it again be remarked), is the testimony of one, who, for long years, viewed Sister Gonzaga's character at closest range. Few superiors are thus enthusiastically regarded by their subordinates, under a common roof.

Even as, in the words of the familiar adage : "No man is a hero to his valet"—so is it granted by all, that there is no severer test of one's admiration and respect for even the best of men, or women, than that afforded by the intimate contact and almost unavoidable friction of every-day community life.

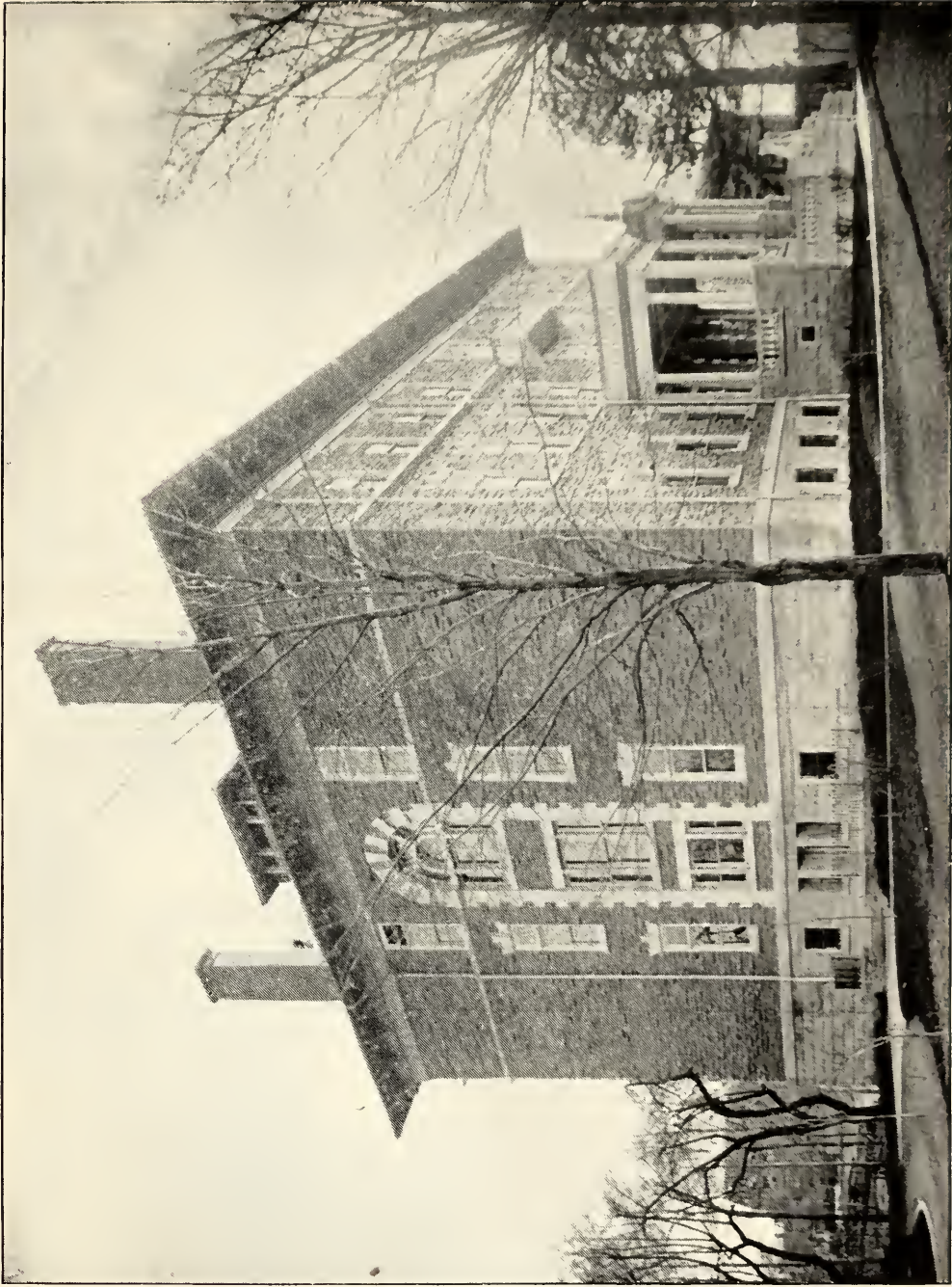
When the plans for the new Asylum (at Germantown) were drawn, and forwarded to His Grace, Archbishop Ryan, for approval, he expressed much pleasure, and said: "I have always felt that Mother Gonzaga was in heaven; but now I am convinced of it. This is nothing short of a miracle, that the Board of Managers should change their mind. The House shall be called THE GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM; and it shall stand as Sister Gonzaga's monument!"*

On Sunday afternoon, September the twenty-fifth, 1898,—not one short year after Sister Gonzaga's death—the corner-stone of the building to be erected to her memory, was laid by Most Rev. Archbishop Ryan, at the junction of Boyer street and Church lane, Germantown.

When the hour for the ceremony arrived, the wide lawn surrounding the old and new buildings of the Sisterhood was filled with a vast crowd of about five thousand spectators.

Some of the visitors improvised seats from

*The Archbishop's estimate of Sister Gonzaga's sterling merits may be gathered from a remark he made to the writer when she submitted the present work for his episcopal *Imprimatur*. Having expressed his gratification that the Life of so noble a woman had been written, His Grace added these significant words, which contained the highest praise he could bestow upon her solid worth: "*Sister Gonzaga was to the Sisterhood what the Kenricks were to the priesthood.*"



THE GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM, GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA.

the building materials lying about ; others occupied benches and chairs in the grounds, and on the porches of the old house. Among these, were the orphan girls of the Asylum.

It was a happy occasion for them, as for all the devoted children and friends of the dear departed Mother. Some of her old soldier boys of the Civil War were among the throng gathered to do homage to her memory.

Hundreds of other on-lookers were ranged outside the grounds ; whilst, drawn up in line, in true military regulation, were the St. Vincent's Cadets in their smart blue uniforms, and gallantly armed with their shining rifles. Smaller cadets, in white, brought up the rear. The band of St. Francis' Industrial School was also in attendance, and gave some stirring selections.

At four o'clock, the procession of Seminarians, preceded by a cross-bearer and acolytes, approached the building, escorting the priests and His Grace, Archbishop Ryan. The blessing of the stone was performed ; and in it, was placed a metal box containing coins of the current year ; portraits of the late Mother Gonzaga, of Archbishop Ryan, and of Very Rev. D. I. McDermott (the preacher of the occasion); a history of the Mother-house at Seventh and Spruce streets ; a list of the Sisters then in charge of the orphans, there ; the Philadelphia secular

papers of the previous day, and a copy of the *Catholic Standard and Times* of that date.

The collection on the occasion, it is to be regretted, was notably small—only amounting, as it did, all told, to two hundred and seventy dollars and ninety-five cents !

This was disappointing, considering the vast throng present ; and considering, also, the fact that the public are rarely, if ever, called upon to contribute to the work of the SISTERS OF CHARITY.

The latter, however, with their characteristic sweetness, and faculty for kindly interpretations, did not attribute the meagre returns to any lack of generosity on the part of the visitors, but to the failure of the collectors to reach a very large proportion of the spectators.

The sermon was delivered by Very Rev. Daniel I. McDermott, Rector of St. Mary's church, Philadelphia, from the text : "*As you would that men should do unto you, do you also unto them in like manner.*" (St. Luke vi, 31.)

After premising that the work of all Orphan Asylums should be merely temporary—that it is, in short, but provisional to the transfer of the orphans into charitable families ; and, after a spirited arraignment of the Catholics of this Archdiocese for their indifference to the needs of the orphans, and their neglect to adopt them

into their homes, Father McDermott eloquently continued :

“ The fact that there are 2,500 orphans in the asylums of the diocese proclaims that to 500,000 Catholics the helplessness of these children has appealed in vain ; that the dying mothers tortured with anxiety about their children’s temporal and spiritual welfare have appealed in vain ; that living mothers whose heart-strings were torn because poverty compelled separation from their children, have appealed in vain ; that the angels guardian of children, worse than orphaned by vicious parents, have appealed in vain ; that Jesus Christ, who has made the cause of these children His own, has appealed in vain to the Catholics of this great diocese, to take these little strangers in.

“ At Bethlehem, it was measurably true that there was no room for the Christ Child, but it cannot be said of the 100,000 families of this diocese, that there cannot be found homes with room and support enough for 2,500 orphans. To Bethlehem, belongs the reproach : ‘ He came to His own, and His own received Him not.’ Shall Christ say to the Catholics of this diocese : ‘ Depart from Me, for I was a stranger, and you took Me not in ’ ?

“ A strange feature of this question is the

fact that the coal region has rarely, if ever, asked for the admission of an orphan into an asylum, although, owing to the dangers of mining, it has a larger percentage of orphans than any other section of the diocese. The coal region not only provides in families for its orphans, but it receives more orphans from asylums for adoption than any other section of the diocese. The coal region is an illustration of the proverb, 'Charity gives itself rich, while covetousness hoards itself poor.' While the crumbs that fall from the tables of the rich would more than feed the orphans, the rich are, as a rule, as indifferent to the orphans as Dives was to Lazarus.

"It is not lack of means that prevents the families of the diocese from offering its orphans homes, nor is it altogether lack of disposition to care for them; it is simply an unwillingness to have the trouble, the bother, the worry of day after day, of year after year, looking after them, of assuming before God and man responsibility for them. It is this shrinking from the work, this shirking of the obligation of caring for the orphans, that closes the doors of the homes of the diocese against them.

"In this extremity, God calls upon heroic souls to leave their homes and friends, to leave

all things that mortals hold dear, and follow Christ in providing asylums for the homeless. These self-sacrificing souls devote themselves to the work of caring not for one orphan, but for thousands of orphans. They devote themselves to the work, not for five, or ten, or fifteen years, but during their lifetime. They give their lives for the orphans, as really as if they shed their blood for them.

“To suffer and die, and thus end labor and heartache, is a consummation devoutly to be desired; but to live and labor for a lifetime for the orphans, nursing them back to health, soothing the pains of the dying, bearing with the petulance, the faults, and the ingratitude of those in health, is a martyrdom of spirit more fearful and meritorious than a martyrdom of blood.

“There are Catholics who, on the spur of the moment, would pour out treasure like water to feed the orphan, who would fight to preserve the morality and the faith of the orphan, who would face death in fire or water to rescue the orphan from peril, yet who could not deny themselves enough to nurse an orphan for a night; to care for it for a week; to eradicate its evil inclinations, and form good habits in it; to instruct it for the reception of the Sacraments; in a word, they could not give *them-*

selves to the orphan, as the Sisters of Charity do.

“It might be expected that Catholics who shrink from the care of the orphans, who leave them a charge to the religious would generously contribute to the support of orphan asylums. It is, however, the one thing above all others which they grudgingly do. Learn from the Archbishop’s pastoral letters ordering collections for the orphans, how inadequate is the amount contributed for their support. Time and again, has the Archbishop commended the generosity of the faithful towards other charities, yet the beggarly contributions to the orphans have forced him to complain, even to threaten.

“It was this marked indifference to the fate of the orphan that made the Board of Managers demur to the Archbishop’s suggestion that this Asylum should be built. The managers admitted that a new building was needed to relieve the congested condition of the asylum, and to provide for the daily-increasing number of orphans, but they did not feel justified in going into debt, relying on the precarious support given in these times to such an institution.

“It was not until the Archbishop’s suggestion was seconded by a voice from the grave, (it

may be piously believed, by a voice from heaven), that the Board of Managers threw human prudence to the winds, and began this building, firmly convinced that a work ordered by heaven cannot fail.

“This orphanage is called THE GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM, because, after her death, there was found—under a statue of St. Joseph—a prayer written by MOTHER GONZAGA in her last illness, beseeching St. Joseph, the protector of childhood, to bring about the erection of this house.

“This heroic Sister of Charity had devoted seventy years of her life to the service of the orphans in St. Joseph’s Asylum, Seventh and Spruce streets, this city. She knew from bitter experience what it was to labor for the orphans, and to beg for their support. She had seen her little charges many a time hungry, the pantry empty, the purse without a quarter of a dollar in it to provide food for children who were crying for bread.

“She knew what it was to appeal for aid to cold, indifferent Catholics, to face a hostile world that hated her religion, and held the garb of the nun in contempt. She knew that extremes meet, that ‘man’s necessity is God’s opportunity.’ She had experienced how God

comes to the relief of His faithful servants in their extremities.

"She remembered that God had, in hours of dire need, moved those not of the household of faith, butchers and bakers, to fill her baskets. She remembered that the heroic struggles of the Sisters had attracted the attention of the first and best Catholics of the city to her work, had interested them in it, until she saw the Asylum conducted by devoted Sisters, controlled by a Board of wise managers, so prosper that it was excelled by none, and equaled by but few.

"She had realized to the full, Christ's fidelity to the promise, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

"The GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM owes its inception to the prayer to St. Joseph, the foster-father of the Child Jesus, breathed by the dying lips of this venerable servant of God who has gone, full of years, of labors, of merits, of faith, of hope, of charity, let us piously believe, to an exceeding great reward.

"It needs no human tongue to commend such institutions as this one to your charitable consideration. The temporal and spiritual necessities of hundreds of hapless children call upon you to contribute to their support. Voices

from another world, yes, voices from heaven and voices from hell, plead with you in their behalf. As the rich man, from the depths of hell, besought Abraham to send some one to warn his brothers lest they should come into that place of torture, so thousands of children lost through the want of such institutions, raise their voices from the abyss of woe, beseeching you to protect the innocence of unfortunate children who are in danger of being (as they are) eternally lost.

“Thousands of children who have been sheltered and saved by our asylums appeal from heaven to you to save the souls of children whose only hope of heaven is the training they will receive in asylums. From their eternal torments, parents damned for their neglect of their children, appeal to you to prevent their children from becoming hereafter their tormentors. From heaven, parents appeal to you to enable their children to become hereafter sharers in their bliss.

“He, who said, ‘Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,’ from the midst of the children of whom He is the joy, appeals to you to see, that not one of those He loves so tenderly be separated from Him.

“Do this, and the blessing of them that were

ready to perish, shall come upon you. Do this, and you shall hear from the lips of the merciful Judge: 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the kingdom prepared for you; for I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; as long as ye did it unto these little ones, ye did it unto Me! Amen!'"

The exercises closed with the bestowing of the episcopal blessing by His Grace, the Archbishop.

Among the priests present were Very Rev. James McGill, V. C. M.; Revs. John B. Hespelein, C. SS. R.; John Scully, S. J.; George McKinney, C. M.; John J. Elcock; H. V. White, C. M.; John W. Moore, C. M.; Andrew Murphy, C. M.; William C. Hctor, C. M.; John T. McMenamin; John Corcoran, C. M.; Theodore McCormick, C. M., and Father Molloy, C. M.

The following members of the Board of Managers, of which the Archbishop is chairman, were also present: John M. Campbell, Henry T. Coleman, Alfred C. Gibson, Dr. W. F. Atlee, Bernard L. Douredoure, John P. Murta, General Russell Thayer, Pierce Archer, Frederick C. Lingg, and Isaac Hough.

The site of the GONZAGA MEMORIAL is said to be part of the grounds originally covered by the home of the well-known d'Invilliers family—a lamented member of which, Madame Adelaide

d'Invilliers, died not long since at Rome, Italy, a professed nun of the Order of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The location of the Asylum is thoroughly rural, though within easy access of both steam and trolley cars. Here, at a cost of some eighty thousand dollars, for construction and general furnishing, is erected one of the noblest edifices of its kind in the country. It is capable of accommodating one hundred and fifty (or more) children. With a lovely old colonial front, and spacious entrance hall, the handsome building is constructed of stone and Indiana lime-stone trimmings, its quaint hip-roof being covered with glazed, corrugated tile.

The GONZAGA ASYLUM has a frontage of one hundred feet on Church lane, extending back seventy-five feet in depth, not including two smoke-proof-tower fire-escapes, in the rear. These run from the top to the bottom of the building, communicating with each floor; and in them, are the gas and water pipes and the plumbing—all being of the best sanitary type. The stairs of the fire-escape are used generally as the service-stairs.

In the principal entrance hall, near the main door, the Managers have erected a memorial tablet of marble, with this inscription:

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED TO THE MEMORY
OF OUR BELOVED SISTER, MARY GONZAGA,
WHO DIED OCTOBER 8, 1897, AND WHO, FOR
71 YEARS, DEVOTED HER LIFE TO THE POOR
AND THE ORPHAN.

The old building, once used as the branch-asylum, is now utilized as offices and laundry: or for school purposes for some of the smaller children. It is connected with the new building by a fifty-foot stone-covered passageway.

A statue of St. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA surmounts the main porch at the entrance to the new Asylum: and many other statues of the Blessed Mother, of St. Vincent, St. Joseph, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and of the Guardian Angels, are distributed throughout the hallway and rooms. All these are the gifts of personal friends of the Asylum and the Sisterhood. The basement of the house contains dining-rooms, kitchen, lavatories, pantries, and storerooms.

On the first floor are located parlors, a large linen-room, chapel, Community room, and sacristy. The second and third floors contain two large dormitories, several smaller ones, and an infirmary. The attic contains storerooms.

On each floor, adjoining the smoke-proof-tower fire-escapes, are provided toilet and bath rooms; and in the loft of each tower, is located a tank having 3,000 gallons' capacity.

The building can be heated by direct radiation from a low-temperature hot-water-heating apparatus. Everything necessary, in fine, for the safety and convenience of the inmates has been most generously provided; although, in so doing, the devoted Sisterhood have expended all their available funds, and mortgaged both the old properties at Seventh and Spruce streets, and the new property in Germantown, to the amount of sixty-five thousand dollars.

They trustingly rely on the generosity of their good friends and benefactors to enable them to reduce their heavy burden.

The Home is intended for white orphan girls, who are received at as tender an age as three years, and are cared for by the Sisters until they reach fourteen years, when they are placed in a way to earn their livelihood in the outside world, in some decent and suitable calling.

On the twenty-first of June, 1899 (very appropriately commemorated in the calendar as the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of the institution), the GONZAGA MEMORIAL ASYLUM was formally dedicated by Most Rev. Archbishop Ryan.

Promptly, at four o'clock in the afternoon, His Grace, attended by a large retinue of priests and seminarians, commenced the dedication of the building, the imposing procession passing through every part of the structure, whilst the Archbishop sprinkled the walls, etc., with holy water.

On reaching the chapel, Solemn Vespers were chanted, followed by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

At the close of the services, an informal reception to the Archbishop was held in the parlors of the institution, when many of the friends of the House, and some of its inmates, were presented to His Grace. Later, the Sisters invited to a little collation the distinguished prelate, the visiting clergymen, and some prominent laymen who had attended the ceremony of dedication.

In this latter solemnity, the Rev. John J. Maher, C. M., acted as deacon; Rev. Joseph A. Skelly, C. M., as sub-deacon; and Rev. W. F. Likely, C. M., as master of ceremonies. Rev. John J. O'Byrne, C. M., presided at the organ.

Among the priests present in the sanctuary, were Very Rev. D. I. McDermott, of St. Mary's; Rev. W. A. Fitzgerald, of St. Bridget's; Rev. J. J. McMenamin, of the Nativity; Rev. Antonio Isoleri, of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi's Italian

church; Rev. J. J. Corcoran, and Rev. John Englert, of St. Peter's, Philadelphia.

The Sister-Visitatrix of the Order, Mother Mary Mariana, Superior of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent in the United States, was also present, from the Mother-house at Emmitsburg, Maryland.

As, late in that golden summer afternoon, the honored guests of the occasion took their departure—they paused lingeringly, one by one, in the spacious hallway, for a parting glance at the Tablet on the wall, recording the name and loyal service of the heroine of the hour—our own dear old SISTER GONZAGA.

And now, we too, gentle readers of this Memoir, after having been privileged to follow, in spirit, the long, eventful career of that holy servant of God, from the cradle to the grave, we also take our leave of our venerable subject at the hallowed portals of the GONZAGA MEMORIAL.

The love and reverence of devoted, grateful hearts have striven to erect this monument to thee, O mother and friend of many! beloved Daughter of St. Vincent! But well they know that now thou needest not—that thou valuest not—earth's poor tributes of marble, granite or brass.

Thy most enduring memorial, thy true imperishable monument, O glorified spirit of the sainted dead! is in the thousands of immortal souls whom thou hast snatched from eternal ruin, and set, like brilliant jewels, in the diadem of thy celestial Spouse!

Yet here, within the walls of the GONZAGA MEMORIAL (as in thy own old cherished home, ST. JOSEPH'S ASYLUM), shall thy blessed work go bravely on!

Even though dead, thou shalt live again in thy faithful daughters, who shall treasure thy wise counsels, and perpetuate thy noble endeavors in the cause of the helpless little ones of Christ.

Thus, thy name, thy labors, beloved SISTER GONZAGA, shall vanish not, unrecorded, from the tablets of Time, from the annals of an honorable renown; for, thine are among the

“—deeds which should not pass away,

And names that must not wither, though the earth

Forgets her empires with a just decay.

The high, the mountain majesty of Worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe;

And from its immortality, looks forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.”

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Donnelly, Eleanor C.
1838-1917.

Life of Sister Mary Gonzaga
Grace of the Daughters of

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Donnelly, Eleanor C.
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Life of Sister Mary Gonzaga
Grace of the Daughters of

Life of Stister Mary Gonzaga Grace
of the daughters of charity of
St. Vincent de Paul 1812-1897



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